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BY

JAMES COMPER GRAY,

Author of "Topics for Teachers," "The Class and the Desk," &c., &c.

OLD TESTAMENT.

VOL. X.

Containing Daniel, and the Minor Prophets.

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THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

Introduction.

I. Author. DANIEL, whose name sig. "Judge of God," was of the tribe of Judah, and prob. of the royal house (i. 3). In the fourth year of Jehoiakim (B.C. 606) he was carried to Babylon; *i.e.* eight years before Ezekiel, and probably between the twelfth (*Ignatius*) or the eighteenth year (*Chrysostom*) of his age (i. 4). There he was placed in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and became acquainted with the science of the Chaldees, compared with whom, however, God gave him, as he records, superior wisdom. By this king he was raised to high rank and great power, and, with some interruptions, he retained his position both under the Babylonish and Persian dynasties. He died at an advanced age, having prophesied during the whole of the captivity (i. 21), and his last prophecy being delivered two years later, in the third year of the reign of Cyrus (*Angus*). II. Time. From 606 B.C. to 534 B.C. III. Language. From ii. 4. to end of vii. was written in Chaldee, the remainder in Hebrew. IV. Contents. The book has commonly been divided into two parts, consisting of six chapters each (*Rosenmuller*, *Havernick*, *Zundel*, *Horne*, etc.). The first six are regarded as historical, and the remaining six as prophetical; or the first part is called the "Book of History," the second the "Book of Visions" (but see the synopsis by *Keil*). V. Authenticity (see the treatise of *Hengstenberg* on Daniel; also the general introduction by *Havernick*). The predictions of this book have much of the distinctness of history, and have long formed an important part of the evidence of Scripture. From Porphyry downwards, indeed, the only resource of infidelity has been to maintain that they were written after the events they describe—a subterfuge entirely unfounded in fact (*Angus*). VI. General Character. Quite apart from the significancy of these predictions are many of the moral and spiritual lessons of this book. It was written in the darkness of the most terrible captivity which the people of God had ever known, and yet it contains some of the grandest revelations of the future glories of the Church. Everywhere, moreover, the providence of God is seen working or overruling all for her good. The predictions of the book extend from the establishment of the Medo-Persian monarchy to the general resurrection, the faith of believers being confirmed by the fulfilment of intermediate predictions foretelling the speedy punishment of two proud and impious kings and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The history of the temptation of Daniel and his companions, their constancy and deliverance, is highly instructive, illustrating at once the mystery of the Divine dispensations and the spirit of fidelity and patience with which good men submit to them. The promise of the rebuilding of the temple was given to a penitent and prayerful prophet, the promise more comprehensive than the prayer he presented. He asked concerning Jerusalem: the answer told also of Messiah the Prince. The clear announcement of Christ's atonement, and of the time when He was to appear (ix. 24—26), His future dignity, and His coming in the clouds of heaven (*see* Acts i., ii.), make this portion of the book of the deepest interest to the Church (*Angus*).

The intimate connection between the Book of Daniel and the Revelation of John must strike every reader of the Holy Scriptures. They mutually interpret each other, and together constitute one grand system of prophecy extending down to the end of the world. Both contain predictions, the exact interpretation of which is extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, till the mystery of God shall be finished (*Barrows*).

Synopsis.

(According to Keil.)

Historico-Biographical Introduction ..... chap. i.

PART I.—The Development of the World-Power ..... ii.—vii.

Sec. 1. Nebuchadnezzar's Vision of the World-Monarchies, and its Interpretation by Daniel ..... ii.

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1, 2 (1) **third year**, *comp.* 2 Ki. xxiv. 1 ; 2 Chr. xxxvi. 5, 6 ; Je. xxv. 1.[a] **besieged it**, this actually took place in the fourth year : but Nebuc. had taken away some of the nobles, prob. as hostages, in the end of the third year, and before the battle of Carchemish. (2) **part . . God**, as the temple had been previously spoiled, only part of its treasures could be taken by Nebuc. **land of Shinar**, Ge. x. 10, xi. 2. The older name of Babylonia, which was preserved in the district. **his god**, Bel-Merodach.

Wealth of heathen temples.—In all heathen temples there is a place for the sacred jewels and other treasures. The ornaments of the idols are sometimes of great value. I have seen the small crown, breastplate, and necklaces of one idol, worth more than £400.[b]

3—5 (3) **master . . eunuchs**, *comp.* the *Kislar-aga* of the Turkish sultans.[a] **bring**, away from Jerusalem. **king's seed**, Josephus says that Daniel was of the family of Zedekiah. **princes**, *parthemim*, not a Semitic word, poss. Persian.[b] (4) **blemish**, of body. **cunning**, or showing signs of quickness and intelligence. They were to be youths, not mere children. **learning . . Chaldæans**, "The Chaldees were the depositories of the philosophy and learning of the East at that time."[c] (5) **daily provision**, wh. all the members of the court shared. **meat**, a word designedly including delicacies.

Chief of the eunuchs.—The master of the black eunuchs is still one of the most important officers at the court of the

a "Nebuc. started fr. Bab. in Jehoiakim's third year, and arrived at Jerus. in his fourth."—*Wordsworth.*
"Nebuc. is called king by anticipation. He was for two years associated with his father in the government, before he became sole king."—*Josephus.*
b *Roberts.*

a "There are 3,000 goolans (slaves) who live in the palace, and attend the person of the Shah wherever he goes. At Constantinople this class is called *ishoglan*, they are promising boys, stolen or forcibly taken from their Chris-

tian parents, and brought up as Muslims. They are kept in the seraglio, under strict discipline, receive a good education, and then have appointments in the civil and military service." — *Van Lennep.*

b "The plural of a Persian word." —*Max Müller.* Est. i. 3, vi. 9.

c "Besides the study of politics and the art of war, the learning chiefly valued among them was astrology, or the knowledge of the heavenly motions, the interpretation of dreams, and architecture."—*Lowth.*

d Rosenmuller.

e Burder.

a One that kept his station in the greatest of revolutions, reconciling policy and religion, business and devotion, magnanimity and humility, authority and affability, conversation and retirement, interest and integrity, heaven and the court, the favour of God, and the favour of the king." — *Bishop Ken.*

b Ovington.

"Felicity shows the ground where Industry builds a fortune."—*Sir H. Wotton.*

a Comp. Ex. xxxiv. 15; 1 Co. x. 20; and also Eze. iv. 13, 14; Ho. ix. 3.

b Le. iii. 17, vi.

Turkish emperor, the arrangement of which is, for the most part, formed after the household of the ancient Persian emperors He is called Kislar-aga, that is, overseer of the girls, and is the chief of the black eunuchs who guard the harem or residence of the women. "The Kislar-aga, by his place, enjoys a powerful influence in affairs, but particularly in those of the court, for which reason the other agas bring concerns before him. His consideration and influence over the emperor is almost always secure." *d* Curtius says, that in all barbarous or uncivilised countries, the stateliness of the body is held in great veneration; nor do they think any capable of great services or actions to whom nature has not vouchsafed to give a beautiful form and aspect. It has always been the custom of the Eastern nations to choose such for their principal officers, or to wait on princes and great personages. Sir Paul Ricaut observes, "that the youths that are designed for the great offices of the Turkish empire must be of admirable features and looks, well shaped in their bodies, and without any defects of nature; for it is conceived that a corrupt and sordid soul can scarce inhabit in a serene and ingenuous aspect; and I have observed not only in the seraglio, but also in the courts of great men, their personal attendants have been of comely, lusty youths, well habited, deporting themselves with singular modesty and respect in the presence of their masters; so that when a pacha aga spahi travels, he is always attended with a comely equipage, followed by flourishing youths, well clothed and mounted, in great numbers." *e*

6, 7 (6) **Daniel**, meaning, "God is my judge." *a* **Hananiah**, "God is gracious." **Mishael**, "Who is as God." **Azariah**, "God is a helper." (7) **names**, wh. were adaptations of the names of the Bab. gods, as their previous names had been adaptations of the names of Jehovah. *Nebo*, and *Beltis* the goddess wife of Bel, were objects of Bab. worship. *Sac* also was a Chaldæan idol. **Belteshazzar**, or Bel's prince. **Shadrach**, "Inspired by the sun-god." **Meshach**, "Who is as *Shak*," the Venus of Bab. mythology. **Abed-nego**, "Servant of the shining fire."

The new name of favouritism.—"When any Indian subject stands so fair in the eye of his prince as to be raised to some advanced degree of trust or honour, he acquires at the same time a new name according to the prince's fancy. Thus the preceding governor of Surat was named Muck-teu-chan (Lord after my own heart); the present is styled Anamat-chan (Conscientious lord) because of his fidelity and integrity." *b* Thus writes an author at the close of the seventeenth century, and the custom is still as prevalent as ever, as the invasion of Syria by Bonaparte proved, when many of his officers not only abandoned their faith, but, entering into affinity with the Mohammedans, changed their names also, and assumed others expressing virtues or qualities supposed to be possessed by them.

8—10 (8) **defile himself**, by partaking of food which had been offered to idols, *a* and also killed with the blood. *b* **wine**, offered in libation to idols; and doubtless having also intoxicating properties. (9) **tender love**, intimating that the officer had a personal affection for him. Comp. case of Joseph, Ge. xxxix. 11. (10) **worse liking**, looking less healthy and

comely, so indicating that you have been underfed. sort, the rest of your party. endanger my head, Eastern kings at once order the execution of servants who they think are proving unfaithful.

Oblations.—It was the custom of most nations, before their meals, to make an oblation of some part of what they ate and drank to their gods, as a thankful acknowledgment that everything which they enjoyed was their gift. These oblations were called *libamina* among the Romans, so that every entertainment had something in it of the nature of a sacrifice. This practice generally prevailing, made Daniel and his friends look upon the provisions coming from the king's table as no better than meats offered to idols, and, by being so offered, to be accounted unclean or polluted.[c] Daniel's concern in the matter of the food prepared for himself and his companions was in accordance with the Mosaic law. Its regulations required that an Israelite should not eat victuals prepared by one not acknowledging the law. The reason was not merely the distinction between clean and unclean, for the process of killing needed to be done in a certain manner. And it was also common amongst pagan nations to make an oblation to the gods of part of what they were about to eat.

11—13 (11) Melzar, an official name, meaning "the overseer of wine;" the steward, an officer under Ashpenaz, who had the special care of these four young men, whose food was to differ from that of the others. (12) prove, test us: experiment for a short time and watch the result. pulse, a general term for a vegetable diet.[a] (13) as thou seest, these words were spoken with quiet confidence as to the result.

Gain of abstinence.—A man, long noted for intemperate habits, was induced by Rev. John Abbott to sign the pledge "in his own way," which he did in these words: "I pledge myself to drink no more intoxicating drinks for one year." Near the end of the year he again appeared at a temperance meeting, without having once touched a drop. "Are you not going to sign again?" asked Mr. Abbott. "Yes," replied he, "if I can do it in my own way." And, accordingly, he wrote, "I sign this pledge for nine hundred and ninety-nine years; and, if I live to that time, I intend to take out a life-lease!" A few days after he called upon the tavern keeper, who welcomed him back to his old haunt. "Oh! landlord," said he, as if in pain, "I have such a lump on my side!" "That's because you have stopped drinking," said the landlord; "you won't live long if you keep on." "Will drink take the lump away?" "Yes; and if you don't drink, you'll soon have a lump on the other side. Come, let's drink together;" and he poured out two glasses of whiskey. "I guess I won't drink," said the former inebriate, "especially if keeping the pledge will bring another lump; for it isn't very hard to bear, after all." And with this he drew the lump—a bag of dollars—from his side-pocket, and walked off, leaving the landlord to his reflections.

14—16. (14) consented, bec. the test was a very fair one. (15) fairer, the complexion healthier and clearer. (16) pulse, vegetable diet, including fruits.[a] De. viii. 3.

Diet and health.—It is probable that there was nothing extraordinary or out of the common way in this circumstance. Sir

26, xvii. 10—14, xix. 26.

"A deaf and dumb pupil of the Abbé Licard, on being asked what he understood by the word gratitude, wrote down immediately, "Gratitude is the memory of the heart."—*Brown's Philosophy of the Human Mind.*

r. 8. *E. Bather*, iii. 505; *C. E. Kennaway*, 211.

c Burder.

a Gesenius.

"Hold fast the belief that Daniel made not this request rashly, or as if it originated with himself, but because he was moved so to do by the Holy Spirit."—*Calvin.*

"The prudence and discretion of Daniel are here displayed.... He is desirous of avoiding offence, even while he refuses the food prepared for him."—*Archd. Rose.*

"Daniel was not a vegetarian as refusing all animal food, but refusing that wh. was not killed in the right way, or had been sacrificed to idols."—*Gadsby.*

a "Dried dates pressed into cakes, gourds, melons, and cucumbers formed the ordinary diet

and goat's milk the ordinary drink, among the Babylonians of Daniel's day."—*Rawlinson.*
b Harmer.

J. Chardin observes, "I have remarked this, that the countenances of the Kechichs are in fact more rosy and smooth than those of others, and that these people who fast much, I mean the Armenians and the Greeks, are notwithstanding very beautiful, sparkling with health, with a clear and lively countenance."[b]

17. **learning and wisdom**, prob. in those things which appertain to politics and government, rather than to merely theoretical or to scientific knowledge. **visions and dreams**, by which in ancient times, and especially in heathen nations, God was pleased sometimes to reveal His will.[a]

Youthful piety (*vv.* 17—19).—In the example of Daniel we have—I. Youthful piety possessed. II. We have youthful piety tried. III. We have to observe youthful piety honoured. IV. We have also to contemplate youthful piety useful.[b]

Genius of youth.—Almost everything that is great has been done by youth. For life in general there is but one decree. Youth is a blunder; manhood a struggle; old age a regret. Do not suppose that I hold that youth is genius; all that is genius, when young, is divine. Why, the greatest captains of ancient and modern times both conquered Italy at five-and-twenty! Youth, extreme youth, overthrew the Persian empire. Don John of Austria won Lepanto at twenty-five—the greatest battle of modern times;—had it not been for the jealousy of Philip, the next year he would have been emperor of Mauritania. Gaston de Foix was only twenty-two when he stood a victor on the plain of Ravenna. Every one remembers Condé and Rocroy at the same age. Gustavus Adolphus died at thirty-eight. Look at his captains: that wonderful duke of Weimar, only thirty-six when he died; Banier himself, after all his miracles died at forty-five; Cortes was little more than thirty when he gazed upon the golden cupolas of Mexico. When Maurice of Saxony died at thirty-two, all Europe acknowledged the loss of the greatest captain and the profoundest statesman of the age. Then there is Nelson, Clive;—but these are warriors, and perhaps you may think there are greater things than war. I do not; I worship the Lord of hosts. But take the most illustrious achievements of civil prudence. Innocent III., the greatest of the popes, was the despot of Christendom at thirty-seven. John de Medici was a cardinal at fifteen, and Guiccardini tells us baffled with his statecraft Ferdinand of Arragon himself; he was pope as Leo X. at thirty-seven. Luther robbed even him of his richest province at thirty-five. Take Ignatius Loyola and John Wesley; they worked with young brains. Ignatius was only thirty when he made his pilgrimage and wrote the *Spiritual Exercises.* Pascal wrote a great work at sixteen,—the greatest of Frenchmen, and died at thirty-seven. Ah! that fatal thirty-seven, which reminds me of Byron, greater even as a man than a writer. Was it experience that guided the pencil of Raphael when he painted the palaces of Rome? He died, too, at thirty-seven. Richelieu was secretary of state at thirty-one. Well, then there are Bolingbroke and Pitt, both ministers before other men leave cricket. Grotius was in great practice at seventeen, and attorney-general at twenty-four. And Acquaviva—Acquaviva was general of the Jesuits, ruled every cabinet in Europe, and colonised America, before he was thirty-seven.

a "Daniel had a great aptitude for the exercise of this gift, while its presence was, on every particular occasion, an answer to prayer."—*Archd. Rose.*

"Even a dream comes from God."—*Homer.*

Ge. xli. 8.

b J. Parsons.

"The retrospect on youth is too often like looking back on what was a fair and promising country; but is now desolated by an overwhelming torrent, from which we have just escaped. Or it is like visiting the grave of a friend whom we had injured, and are precluded by his death from the possibility of making him an atonement."—*J. Foster.*

"Youth will never live to age without they keep themselves in breath with exercise, and in heart with joyfulness. Too much thinking doth consume the spirits; and oft it falls out, that while one thinks too much of doing, he leaves others to do the effect of his thinking."—*Sir Philip Sidney.*

What a career! It is needless to multiply instances. The history of heroes is the history of youth.[c]

18—21. (18) end . . days, *v.* 5, three years. (19) communed, talked with them, to find out which of them might be best suited for his purposes. stood . . king, were appointed to offices in direct relation to the royal person. (20) wisdom, practical skill and judgment.[a] better, bec. these were men of theory rather than of practical ability. The Jews are still remarkable for their business gifts. (21) continued, held his post through all changes, bec. found both skilful and faithful.[b]

Charms, talismans, and amulets.—Foremost amongst what may be called the "curiosities of theology" is the use of charms, talismans, and amulets. No sooner had a lively faith uttered some glowing expression or adapted some external symbol, than a morbid superstition, ever on the alert, seized the emblem or metaphor, and perverted it into a wholly different meaning. There are many passages in the Bible so misapplied, and in the mediæval ages nothing was more common than to protect persons and property by peculiar figures inscribed with the initial letters of various names and sentences from Holy Writ, the application of which, if not absolutely blasphemous, was in most instances puerile in the extreme. This custom descended probably from the Oriental Jews, who, as is well known, attached a most extravagant and esoteric importance to the position of different letters and the construction of names and epithets in the Hebrew Bible; and it has been by their rabbis gravely stated that these minutiæ contained in themselves a perfect sacred and mysterious system of science, history, and chronology. These remarks will serve to explain a peculiarity associated with the passage above quoted. In a MS. Psalter taken at the late fall of Magdala the name of one of Daniel's companions, "Anania," written as indicated in the margin, but in Ethiopic characters, is asserted to be an infallible preservative against injuries by fire or lightning. The words at the sides of the parallelogram form the sentence, "Nebucadnezzar the king and said," inscribed within which the name "Ananya" reads four ways, and the letters S K (signifying in Ethiopic "protection") four ways also in the centre. It is certainly curious that in a MS. not more than 400 years old such a superstitious use of the Scriptures should be recommended; and this circumstance recalls the fact that a well-known antiquary and traveller has often stated that when in Egypt about thirty years ago, he was obliged to pacify the sick natives by writing in Arabic the Lord's Prayer on slips of paper, which were then devoutly swallowed as a remedy for their different diseases,—their ignorance of the language not informing them that the writing was from the Frankish Scriptures instead of the Koran, from which verses are still taken for that purpose.

NEBUCA	A	NA	N	YA	D
NETSR	N A	S	K	N	NE
GUS	N	K	S	A N	WA
YABE	AY	N	AN	A	

[c] *J. D'Israeli.*

[a] "Daniel's reputation for wisdom and sanctity became proverbial in the East." —*Wordsworth.*

[b] "Simple words, but what a volume of tried faithfulness is unrolled by them! Amid all the intrigues, indigenous, at all times, in dynasties of Oriental despotism; amid all the envy towards a foreign captive in high office as a king's councillor; amid all the trouble incidental to the insanity of the king, or the murder of two of his successors; in that whole critical period for his people, Daniel *continued.*"—*Pusey.*

"Youth is a flower that soon withereth; a blossom that quickly falls off; it is a space of time in which we are rash, foolish, and inconsiderate, pleasing ourselves with a variety of vanities, and swimming, as it were, through a flood of them. But ere we are aware, it is past, and we are in middle age, encompassed with a thick cloud of cares, through which we must grope." —*Boston.*

"Fate hath no voice but the heart's impulses."—*Schiller.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—3. (1) second year, by Bab. computation, fourth year by the Scripture computation.[a] dreams,[b] or a continued dream. "The plural form marks the vastness of the subject of these dreams." brake, or "was gone away from him."[c] (2) magicians, *etc.*, there seem to have been three distinct classes of Chaldæan doctors, the *Chartummim*, or conjurors; the *Chakamim*, or physicians; and the *Asaphim*, or theosophists. These were distinct from the *Kasdim*[d] and *Gazrim*, the astrologers and divines. (3) know the dream, *i.e.* to remember it.

Astrology.—A supposed art of foretelling future events from the positions and aspects of the heavenly bodies, originating in the notion that the stars have an influence for good or evil on the affairs of men; which influence may be discovered. This art originated in Chaldæa, and was from thence transmitted to the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. Astrologers were in high esteem among the Babylonians, Dan. i. 20, ii. 2, iv. 7, v. 7, 11, 15, and other nations, Dan. ii. 10, and also with the ungodly Jews, Isa. xlvii. 13—15. The Scripture styles them star-gazers, monthly prognosticators, magicians, sorcerers, Chaldæans, soothsayers, and wise men. Astrology was intimately connected with Sabaism, or the worship of the stars; it, in effect, denies God and His providence, and is therefore ranked in Scripture with practices most offensive to Him.[e]

4—6. (4) Syriack, or Aramaic, the popular language of Babylon.[a] O king, *etc.*, ch. iii. 9; Ne. ii. 3. (5) gone from me, passed from my memory, or perhaps, "I have declared my will in the matter."[b] cut in pieces, or made pieces, *i.e.* sawn in two.[c] dunghill, or heaps of rubbish. The houses being made of only sun-burnt bricks, were easily destroyed. (6) rewards, fee, largess; comp. *v.* 48. Chaldee, *nebizbah*, poss. connected with the Turkish *backshish*.

Homage paid to kings.—This ancient wish and address to the throne seems most manifestly to have taken its rise from an ancient and original apprehension, that those who could obtain favour and mercy through the promised Messiah would really live for ever, and have not only as great, but greater powers to be useful hereafter, than they have had on earth.—King's *Morsels of Criticism.*—"On coming in sight of the king, we all pulled off our hats and made a low bow; we then held up our hands towards heaven, as if praying for the king, and afterwards advanced to the fountain, where the Chaous Baushee repeated our names, without any title or addition of respect, ending, 'they have come from Europe as ambassadors to your majesty; may your misfortunes be turned upon me.' Some form of prayer like this is always used in addressing the king. It corresponds to the 'O king, live for ever!' of the ancient Persians."—Elphinstone's *Account of the Kingdom of Cabool.*—"A superior gives a blessing to an inferior by saying to him, when the latter is in the act of doing him reverence, 'Long life to thee!' A poor man going into the presence of a king, to solicit a favour, also uses the same address. 'Oh, father, thou art the support of the destitute, mayest thou live to old age!'"—Ward's *View of the Hindoos.*

a The second year of Ne uc.'s sole sovereignty. About the sixth year of Jehoiakim."—*Spk. Com.*

b For word "dream," as used in a prophetic sense, see 1 Sa. xxviii. 6; Nu. xii. 6.

c "The absence of his sleep was heavy upon him."—*Pusey.*

d "Prob. a certain order of priest-magicians, who wore a peculiar dress, like that seen on the gods and deified men in Assyrian sculptures."—*Fausset.*

e *Green's Dict.*

a The use of this dialect continues to the end of the seventh chapter.

b What Nebuc. did was this—he tried the wise men of Babylon by two tests: 1. Whether they could tell him his dream; 2. Whether they could tell him the meaning of it. See v. 9."—*Wordsworth.*

c "When a man is sawn in two in Morocco, his body is put between two boards, and sawn from the head downwards, until the body falls in two pieces."—*Gadsby.*

v. 4. *J. C. Dieteric, Ant.* 680.

7—9. (7) **tell . . dream,** they could do the easy part of making up an interpretation ; but they would readily be found out if they attempted to make up the dream. (8) **gain the time,** or buy the time.[a] (9) **one decrée,** that given in *v.* 5. **corrupt,** or deceitful. **time be changed,** *i.e.* till either I cease to trouble myself about the dream, or there be a change of government.

Speech on being taunted with youth.—Sir, the atrocious crime of being a young man, which the honourable gentleman has, with such spirit and decency, charged upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny, but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies may cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience. Whether youth can be imputed to any man as a reproach, I will not, sir, assume the province of determining ; but surely age may become justly contemptible, if the opportunities which it brings have passed away without improvement, and vice appears to prevail when the passions have subsided. The wretch who, after having seen the consequences of a thousand errors, continues still to blunder, and whose age has only added obstinacy to stupidity, is surely the object either of abhorrence or contempt, and deserves not that his grey hairs should secure him from insult. Much more, sir, is he to be abhorred who, as he has advanced in age, has receded from virtue, and become more wicked with less temptation ; who prostitutes himself for money which he cannot enjoy, and spends the remains of his life in the ruin of his country.[b]

10—13. (10) **not a man,** quite true ; but there might be a Divinely-inspired man.[a] **king, lord, ruler,** a descending gradation. (11) **rare,** unusual ; never-before-heard-of. Or, a heavy, hard, unreasonable thing. (12) **furious,** overborne with passion, he instantly commanded the execution of his tyrannous decree. (13) **wise men,** it seems that, being under the instruction of these wise men, Daniel and his companions were in danger of being classed with them.

Dreams sometimes indicate truth.—

Many, the greatest, truths
Have been made known in visions or in dreams.
For then it is the soul recalls the spheres
Of pre-existent nature, and evokes
The ghosts of coming ages, or unites
Past, present, future, in one windlike touch
Which loosens the world's zone and renders mind
The master of creation. Be it so !
Once I received a vision—for the crown
Of nature is passivity, and our
Best mood the pure recipient—in a state
Of twilight-like existence, such as that
Of universal substance when the sun.
And light, and darkness, moon, and Heaven, and earth,
Were nigh all one, and nought distinct save souls,
Echoes of Light, reacting heavenwardly.
It was the spirit of the universe,
Whose breast was of like hemispheres of bliss,
Whereon the worlds were nursed, that I beheld.
The fragrance of the fadeless fields of heaven,

a "There is prob. a reference to the notion of the Chaldees, as among the Persians, that some days were more lucky than others. The day then present was an ill-omened one and they would gain one more propitious to their own destiny." — *Wordsworth.*

Is. xli. 22—24, 28, 29 ; Zec. x. 2.

v. 7. *W. Burgh, Lect.* 107.

"Early piety presents a heart to God unsoiled by the world ; like the morning fire, it burns clear, being free from ashes." — *Sutcliffe.*

b *E. Pitt.*

a "God makes the heathen, out of their own mouth, condemn their impotent pretensions to supernatural knowledge, in order to bring out in brighter contrast His power to reveal secrets to His servants." — *Fausset.*

Is. xliv. 24, 25.

vv. 10, 11. *Dr. G. Richards, Bamp. Lect.* 87.

"A man that is young in years may be old in hours, if he have lost no time ; but that happeneth rarely. Generally, youth is like the first cogitations, not so wise as the second ; for there is a youth in thoughts as well as in ages ; and

yet the invention of young men is more lively than that of old, and imaginations stream into their minds better, and as it were more divinely."—*Bacon.*

"The youth who, like a woman, loves to adorn his person, has renounced all claim to wisdom and to glory; glory is due to those only who dare to associate with pain, and have trampled pleasure under their feet."—*Fénélon.*

"A strict belief in fate is the worst of slavery; imposing upon our necks an everlasting lord, or tyrant, whom we are to stand in awe of night and day: on the other hand, there is some comfort that God will be moved by our prayers; but this imports an inexorable necessity."—*Epicurus.*

b Bailey.

The endless blessings of an act of grace,
Or mercy's matron-bosom filled her words;
And each articulate air she did expire,
O'erladen with the lore of ages, e'en
As earth was with her old baptismal flood.
In her deep eye immortal quiet dwelled,
As though all Heaven had settled on one star.
She spake, and I regarded with such awe
As eaglet when he first beholds the sun.
And though what I remember be all true,
Yet in so far as worded it is not
The entire truth uncircumscribable.
Can a spar speak how it was crystallised?
She spake, I said, the spirit, and at her word,
Behold! the heavens were opened as a book.
I am the world-soul, nature's spirit I.
Ere universe or constellation was,
System, or sun, or orb, or element,
Darkness, or light, or atom, I first lived;
I and necessity, though twain in life,
Yet one in Being. Time and life are one:
But insomuch as nature is destroyed
In God's assumption to Divine estate
Of an especial soul, necessity
Ends in extreme original nothingness;
And leaves all supernatural existence free,
As breath in air, like-natured with the same,
Yet altered in condition, function, form,
And glorified. God is, and men exist.
Free agency extends 'tween man and man,
And every finite nature; between God
And man, and every finite being, fate.
What is Divine is of necessity free.
I heard, and I received, and from my soul,
Intense in quiet, perfect in repose,
Like sleep's fantastic frost-work melted death;
And entering straight the heaven-surrounding state
Of deified existence among gods,
It grew ignited with divinity.[b]

14—16. (14) answered .. wisdom, *Vulg.* trans. "Daniel inquired concerning the law and decree."[a] captain .. guard, or chief of the executioners. Comp. Potiphar.[b] (15) hasty, *comp.* Ha. i. 6. (16) time, *comp. v.* 8. Daniel, while asking for time, promised to provide both the dream and the interpretation. Daniel wanted the time that he might engage, with his companions, in earnest prayer. would show, the language of confident faith.

Premonition in dreams.—We have been informed of a strange coincidence in the death of the late Alderman McPherson, which involves the mysterious to such a degree as to make it one of those unaccountable illusions which sometimes occur as a prescient to some impending fate. The facts abound so much in the marvellous, that, were they not given on the undoubted authority of the bereaved widow, who now is left to mourn the loss of him whose death was so strikingly revealed to her, we should not attempt to rehearse them. On the Thursday night

[a] "The word trans. 'wisdom' is very frequent in the Assyrian inscriptions, in the sense of judgment, advice, and also in the sense of command, will, decree."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] Ge. xxxvii. 36, marg.

"The word *tenem*, trans. here 'wisdom,' usually signifies an edict, or public decree, set forth by authority."—*Lowth.*

previous to his death, the deceased gentleman was awakened by the continued sobbing of his wife, whose cries, though asleep, were distinctly audible to several of the inmates of the house. Awakening her he inquired the reason of her incessant moaning, when she informed him that she had had a dream, in which she saw the two gentlemen, who were afterwards the first to tell her the sad news, enter the house and actually inform her of his death. Every circumstance was so vivid, that she remarked it as something peculiar, and besought him on the Saturday morning, when he went away, to be careful of himself, as she felt confident that something unusual would shortly occur. True to her premonition he never returned alive, and on the Rev. Mr. Scott and his friend Mr. Lester entering her house on the same evening to inform her of his death, she did not wait for their announcement, but holding up her hands in despair, said, "Is he dead?" and without waiting for an answer, fell exhausted on the floor. The sad coincidence of the actual circumstances as they occurred, with the dream, marks it one of the strangest on record.[c]

"Youth is ever confiding; and we can almost forgive its disinclination to follow the counsels of age, for the sake of the generous disdain with which it rejects suspicion."—*Harrison.*

c London C. W. Prototype, 1864.

17, 18. (17) **his house,** not necessarily *his own*, but that in wh. he lived. (18) **that . . desire,** an example of united prayer.[a] **God of heaven,** the decided assertion that this God is the only God,[b] Ge. xxiv. 7. **secret,** De. xxix. 29.

Dreams, repeaters of thought.—

In sleep, when fancy is let loose to play,
Our dreams repeat the wishes of the day.
Tho' further toil his tired limbs refuse,
The dreaming hunter still the chase pursues.
The judge abed dispenses still the laws,
And sleeps again o'er the unfinish'd cause.
The dozing racer hears his chariot roll,
Smacks the vain whip, and shuns the fancied goal.
Me too the Muses, in the silent night,
With wonted chimes of jingling verse delight.[c]

a Mat. xviii. 19; Ac. xii 5—12.
b "It involves the recognition of the supreme sovereignty of Him whose handiwork—the moon, the sun, the planets—were the principal objects of Bab. worship."—*Spk. Com.*
c Claudius.

19—23. (19) **night visions,**[a] in wh. he saw just what Nebuc. had seen, and had given to him the key of the meaning of the dream. **blessed,** offered worship and thanksgiving for this gracious answer to prayer. (20) **said,** *etc.*,[b] comp. Ps. cxiii. 2, cxv. 18. (21) **changeth,** *etc.*, suitable to the vision he had seen, wh. concerned the changes of kingdoms.[c] (22) **in the darkness,** *i.e.* things whose causes are as yet quite hidden from human sight. (23) **thank thee,** heartily ascribing all the honour to God.

Holy wisdom.—Wisdom without innocency is knavery; innocency without wisdom is foolery: be therefore as wise as serpents, and innocent as doves. The subtilty of the serpent instructs the innocency of the dove; the innocency of the dove corrects the subtilty of the serpent. What God hath joined together, let no man separate.[d]

a Job xxxiii. 15, 16.
b "Of the four *vv.* of this thanksgiving, two are, for cadence and language, as remarkable as any in Hebrew. . . . The simplicity of the narrative, the pathos of the prayer, the simple stateliness of the prophetic style, and the vivid condensation of this historical prophecy, combined in one, are no slight evidence of the grasp which the writer had of the language wherein he wrote in styles so varied."—*Pusey.*
c Jerome.
d Quarles.

24—26. (24) **destroy not,** the execution of the king's decree had been *delayed;* now, Daniel says, it may be abandoned. **bring,** *etc.*, none could enter the royal presence without distinct permission. (25) **I have found,** *etc.*, this may be only the formal language of the courtier.[a] (26) **art thou able,** this

a "This officer, according to the

manner of courtiers, takes this opportunity of ingratiating himself with the king, as if the discovery of Dan.'s abilities in this kind were owing purely to his diligence."—*Lowth.*

question enabled Daniel to turn the king's thoughts from himself to his God.

Warnings.—Were I the great king of Babylon, when I see the hand writing my destiny upon the wall, what should I care for the massive bowls of my cupboard, or the golden roof of my palace? What fool was ever fond of the orient colours of a bubble? who ever was at the cost to gild a mud wall, or to embroider that tent which he must remove to-morrow? Such is my condition here: I must alter, it cannot. It is the best ceremony that I could note in all the pack of those pontifical rites, that a herald burns tow before the new pope, in all the height of his pomp, and cries, "Holy Father, thus passes the glory of the world!"

27—30. (27) **the secret**, of the dream and interpretation. (28) **God in heaven**, *v.* 18. **latter days**, the after-times. Nebuc., as great founder of a nation, would be deeply interested in its future history.[a] (29) **thoughts**, these gave form to the vision. Dreams usually start from some thought prominent in our minds during the day. (30) **revealed to me**, the language of piety as well as modesty. **their sakes**, better intransitive, "that the interpretation might be made known," etc.

God as a Revealer of secrets (*v.* 28).—Looking at the Great One as the Revealer of secrets we observe—1. That He makes no omissions; 2. That He commits no mistakes; 3. That He has no unkindness. God is constantly revealing the secrets of men now. 1. Through the dictates of human conscience; 2. And through the unguarded actions of human life.[b]

The Revealer of secrets.—The forgotten dream (*see context*), meeting of the wise men, who cannot recall the dream to the king's memory. The cruel edict. Daniel's interposition. He and his friends hold a meeting for prayer. The secret revealed to Daniel, who tells the king and gives the praise to God. Explain secret, and revealer. There are secrets of many kinds that God will reveal. 1. Secrets of goodness; 2. Of wickedness. Speak of the latter. God often reveals secrets of wickedness in the days of this life. This He does in various ways. I. By conscience: explain and ill. conscience. The hands of a watch reveal the state of the wheels and the progress of time; the spring moves them. A gas-meter reveals the secret of quantity of gas consumed. You think so much has not been burned, but the hand on the dial proves it. As the meter registers the gas that has passed through, tells how much when the inspector looks, so conscience records thoughts, and words, and deeds, etc. Dr. Donne, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's, once found a skull with a nail in it. It was the skull of one John Peters. He took it to his wife, who was yet living, and asked her how a little nail, that he showed her in it, came there? Then her conscience spoke out, and she admitted that she had killed him while he was asleep by driving the nail in. II. By Providence: explain Providence. God's rule over all things. Locomotive engine made to go or stop by engineer. God has the same command over all things (see Eccles. x. 20). A gentleman had a flute stolen. This flute had a broken key, tunes played on it missed that note. Shortly after it was stolen his neighbour left that part. Some time after the gentleman went on a visit to his old neighbour, and heard a piping bullfinch whistle some tunes. But one note was always

[a] "Nebuc. had but lately become the sole and undisputed monarch of the empire he was destined to raise to such greatness. The past was to him full of glory, of success, of triumph, ... what would the future be?"—*Spk. Com.*

Ex. xli. 16; Ac. iii. 12.

v. 28. *Dr. W. Worthington, Boyle Lec.* ii. 66; *J. Buckworth's Exis. of God*, 3.

[b] *Dr. Thomas.*

"Happy season of virtuous youth, when shame is still an impassable barrier, and the sacred air-cities of hope have not shrunk into the mean clay hamlets of reality; and man, by his nature, is yet infinite and free."—*Carlyle.*

"Early impressions are not easily erased; the virgin wax is faithful to the signet, and subsequent impressions seem rather to indent the former ones than to eradicate them."—*Colton.*

dropped. The person who had taught the bird was the man who had stolen the flute, and thus he was providentially exposed by the Great Revealer of secrets. III. By character and condition. A man who was digging in a garden called to a gentleman on the other side of the hedge, and showed him an ancient coin that he had found. The poor tattered digger translated the Latin inscription, and explained the history of the period, and how the Romans had got into that region. The gentleman who heard it all was quite sure that so scholarly a man would not be in such circumstances but for some great fault. It was so. The labourer who earned his wretched living by digging the garden of the peasant at twopence an hour, had been educated at the university, had taken his degree, had become a clergyman, had, alas! taken to drinking, had been expelled from his living, and was now a poor outcast. A man one day called on a celebrated London minister, and told him a most pitiful tale. The minister said, "From your speech and manners I am quite sure you have no business to be in such a state." The man confessed then that his misconduct had brought his wretchedness upon him. The secret was revealed. God in these ways works out a revelation of conduct and character by means of conscience, and providence, and circumstance. If He can do this in this life, where there is so much power of concealment, how easily will He do so in that day when every hidden thing shall be revealed! Application :—That the revelation may not then prove your overthrow, seek forgiveness now through the merits of Jesus Christ, who is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him.[c]

"I have often thought what a melancholy world this would be without children, and what an inhuman world without the aged."—*Coleridge.*

"Oh! what a world of beauty fades away with the wing'd hours of youth!"—*Dawes.*

"What must be, shall be; and that which is a necessity to him that struggles, is little more than choice to him that is willing."—*Seneca.*

c Hive.

31—33. (31) **great image**, one great image, made up of four parts.[a] "The dream was evidently such as might be born of the waking thoughts of one accustomed to Bab. magnificence, God using the mental associations as the vehicle of Divine predictions."[b] **brightness**, fr. the burnished gold and silver. **form**, or aspect. (32) **thighs**, or sides. (33) **iron**, iron and brass are the emblems of strength in the prophetical writings.

The prophecy of Daniel (*v.* 31).—Regarding the four great dynasties fulfilled in the successive rise and overthrow of the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman monarchies. I. Notice the objects which Nebuchadnezzar saw. 1. A colossal image, its head of gold—Babylon called by Isaiah "the golden city,"—breast and arms of silver (Persia), belly and thighs of brass (Greece), legs of iron (Rome); 2. The wondrous stone. II. The collision between these two objects which the Prophet witnessed. III. The result which the Prophet predicted. Apply :—1. The undoubted inspiration of the Old Test. Prophets; 2. A justification of the course of Providence towards these nations: 3. A solemn admonition against national idolatry.[c]

Prophetic imagery.—There is usually an obvious and striking congruity in the prophetic and parabolic imagery of the Scriptures. In the present case there would seem to be an exception; for who can conceive of the manner in which iron and clay could be made to combine in the same mass? In respect to the other materials, the gold, the silver, the brass, they are sufficiently homogeneous in their nature to allow of being united in the manner supposed in the vision. But how a soft, yielding substance like clay could form a constituent part of the same

a "The world-power in its totality appears as a colossal human form. Bab., the head, of gold; Medo-Persia, the breast and two arms, of silver; Græco-Macedonia, the belly and two thighs, of brass; and Rome with its Germano-Slavonic offshoots, the legs, of iron, and feet of iron and clay; the fourth still existing."—*Faussel.*

b Robjohns.

c J. Blackburn.

"Proprietors rear strong fences round young trees, while they leave aged forests to take their chance. Permit not the immortal to be twisted, at the

very starting of its growth, for the want of such protection as it is in your power to afford." — *Arnot.*

d Bush.

a Wordsworth.

b "The kingdom of Christ, a kingdom of God's own creating, shall break to pieces the fourth and last monarchy, in which the remainders of the other three were comprehended."—*Lowth.*

c "Grain was winnowed in the E. on an elevated space in the open air, by throwing the grain into the air with a shovel, so that the wind might clear away the chaff."—*Fausset.*

v. 35. *Dr. S. Macgill*, 274; *I. H. Newman*, ii. 259; *J. Garbett*, i. 169.

d J. Parsons.

e W. W. Whythe.

a Eze. xxvi. 7.

"Let fools and cowards start at fancy's visions; thy well-taught spirit knows these dreams are bred from fumes and indigestions that oppress the mind, which thus o'erloaded, still throws off these crudities, these

image, and that too of the very base and pediment upon which it rested, is by no means obvious. We see not, therefore, why the definition given to the original Chaldaic word by Cocceius, Buxtorf, Gesenius, Simonis, Gibbs, and others, viz., potter's ware, or burnt baked clay, is not decidedly to be preferred. And of the original phrase subsequently occurring, "miry clay," *vv.* 41, 42. The first of these lexicographers says expressly, "Nonigitur lutum vel limum notat, sed opus coctum ex limo, vel limum excoctum," it does not therefore signify clay or mud, in its soft state, but something formed by baking from clay. This interpretation gives consistency to the whole imagery, and, if needs be, can be abundantly confirmed from the frequent use of the same term by the Chaldee Targums.[d]

34—36. (34) **stone . . hands**, the Jews agree that this is a figure of the Messiah and His kingdom. The fig. declares the stone to have been prepared without human agency, *i.e.* by Divine power.[a] **smote . . feet**, "the blow is struck during the existence of the fourth empire."[b] (35) **chaff**, Ps. i. 4; Is. xli. 15. Ancient threshing floors were on the tops of hills.[c] **great mountain**, fig. for the way in which the Messiah's kingdom would grow. (36) **we will tell**, speaking in the name of the companions who had shared in the prayer.

The stone cut out without hands (*vv.* 34, 35).—Of this kingdom you are to notice—I. Its primitive appearance of insignificance,—a stone,—a thing small,—without hands,—Divine origin of the Gospel. 1. Observe the circumstances in which the Author of the Gospel personally appeared, in order to establish it; 2. The station and number of the disciples by whom the Gospel was originally embraced and promulgated. II. Its inherent power of progression,—the stone endowed with mysterious energy. 1. The essential constitution of the Gospel, as accounting for its power of progression; 2. The agency by which its essential constitution is to operate and be actually applied. III. Its destined vastness or influence. 1. It is obtained by a slow and gradual process; 2. It is supremely desirable and delightful; 3. It is certainly to be imparted and to be consummated.[d]—*The coming kingdom* (*vv.* 34, 35).—Here we have a description of Christ's kingdom. 1. It is Divine in its origin,—without hands; 2. Its beginning was humble,—stone cut out; 3. Its tendency is progressive,—the stone became a mountain; 4. Its course is triumphant,—smiting the image; 5. Its spread is universal,—it filled the whole earth; 6. Its duration is eternal,—it shall never be destroyed.[e]

37, 38. (37) **king of kings**,[a] the high-flown style in wh. the Persian king is still addressed. It was true of Nebuc., who ruled over subject kings. (38) **men . . beasts . . fowls**, *comp.* the dominion originally given to man, Ge. i. 28, ii. 19, 20. **he given**, *i.e.* the God of heaven.

The king's dream.—In the dream of the king and its interpretation by Daniel, we see how God prepared the world for the coming of Christ. 1. These successive monarchies, by aiming at universal dominion, did much to destroy the mutual estrangement and antagonisms of nations. Different nations were separated from each other by the most hostile feelings; they had very few of those common bonds of interest which now unite nations. Had this state of things continued until Christ came, Christianity

would everywhere have been regarded with aversion as an alien religion, and so could have made little or no progress. But the nationalities were crushed and modified by subjection to a common dominion, the "walls of partition" between the nations were thrown down. "To that resolute king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, may this proud and magnificent notion" of a universal empire be first ascribed (Luthardt); he did much to realise it. It was taken up by Alexander and the Romans. When our Lord appeared the nations were so far united, and had so much of a feeling of mutual interest, that old jealousies and acerbities were either worn out, or far too weak to arrest the progress of Christianity. 2. By these successive empires the vitality of the ancient religions was greatly weakened, if not destroyed, and with it faith in their truth. These were the religions of nations, of races; their deities could only be worshipped in particular places. The working out Nebuchadnezzar's idea of a world-wide empire, by successsve conquerors, led to vast changes in the internal state of the nations, to the wide diffusion of philosophic and political thoughts. And as the old religions were thus brought into collision with each other, and with the growing intelligence and mental activity of men, they languished, they lost their hold upon the minds of men, until in the age of Augustus scepticism prevailed. The world was asking "What is truth?" when the Truth Himself appeared. 3. In the wide diffusion of the Greek language we see another effect of the rise of these empires, and a preparation for the advent of our Lord. Alexander's conquests spread it in the East, Rome's victories in the West. Never was there a language so adapted to embody the truths of Christianity as Hellenistic Greek; never was it so widely diffused as when our Lord appeared: this contributed marvellously to the spread of Christianity. 4. These are a few of the ways in which God brought about "the fulness of time" when the world was ripe for the work of our Lord. While other empires have passed away, His kingdom continues to grow until it shall be in truth "a universal kingdom;" the kingdoms of the world shall become those "of God and of His Christ."

39, 40. (39) **inferior**, in duration, in antiquity, in power, and in wealth. Prob. this represents the Medo-Persian kingdom.[a] **third kingdom**, the Greek monarchy. (40) **fourth**, the Roman.[b] **all these**, or all things.

Divulgements of dreams.—

"In thy faint slumbers, I by thee have watch'd,
And heard thee murmur tales of iron war;
Speak terms of manage to thy bounding steed;
Cry, Courage!—to the field! And thou hast talk'd
Of sallies, and retires; of trenches, tents,
Of pallisadoes, fortins, parapets;
Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin;
Of prisoners' ransom, and of soldiers slain,
And all the currents of a heady fight.
Thy spirit within thee hath been so at war,
And thus hath so bestirr'd thee in thy sleep,
That beads of sweat have stood upon thy brow,
Like bubbles in a late-disturbèd stream:
And in thy face strange motions have appear'd,

ordures of the soul: as such despise them."—*Madden.*

"Pallas pour'd sweet slumbers on his soul; and balmy dreams, the gift of soft repose, calm'd all his pains, and banished all his woes."—*Pope.*

"Regard not dreams, since they are but the images of our hopes and fears."—*Cato.*

"God overrules all mutinous accidents, brings them under His laws of fate, and makes them all serviceable to His purpose."—*Antoninus.*

"On fickle wings the minutes haste, and fortune's favours never last."—*Seneca.*

a "Not united, organised, compacted, and consolidated within like thine; and not so capable of resisting and repelling attacks from without; as was proved by its sudden fall beneath the arms of Alex. the Great"—*Wordsworth*

b "'The Rom. empire to be the fourth kingdom of Daniel, was believed by the Church of Israel before our Saviour's time; and this belief was received by the disciples of the Apostles, and the whole Christian Church for 300 years.'"—*Jos. Mede*

Such as we see when men restrain their breath
On some great sudden haste." [c]

41—43. (41) toes, ten, representing ten sub-kingdoms, or kings.[a] clay .. iron, things wh. will not properly blend. In the very constitution of this kingdom should be the certainty of its ultimate failure and ruin. (42) broken, or brittle.[b] (43) mingle, *etc.*, this would seem to refer to mixed marriages, involving physical deterioration.[c]

Divine action in dreams.—A young woman was murdered in a barn, and buried under the floor. She was thought by all who concerned themselves about her to be still alive in another place; and the murder remained not only undiscovered, but unsuspected at the time, when the young woman's mother was warned repeatedly in a dream to search the barn. She did so; the murder was thus discovered, and the murderer (Corder) condemned and executed. Now, from what other cause than a supernatural action upon the mind of the mother could this dream have been produced? [d]

44, 45. (44) these kings, the ten represented by the toes. never .. destroyed, Christ's kingdom is called an everlasting kingdom, bec. as a spiritual kingdom it is not subject to change and dissolution. not .. left, or pass from hand to hand in the generations. (45) stone .. hands, fig. of Divinely-founded spiritual kingdom.[a]

Dreams double life.—

"That high and welkin-like infinity—
The brighter upper-half of the mind's world,
Thick with great sun-like and constellate thoughts;
And in the night of mind, which is our sleep,
These thoughts shine out in dreams. Dreams double life;
They are the heart's bright shadow on life's flood;
And even the step from death to deathlessness—
From this earth's gross existence unto Heaven—
Can scarce be more than from the harsh hot day
To sleep's soft scenes, the moonlight of the mind.
The wave is never weary of the wind,
But in mountainous playfulness leaps to it
Always; but mind gets weary of the world,
And glooms itself in sleep, like a sweet smile,
Line by line, settling into proper sadness;
For sleep seems part of our immortality:
And why should anything that dies be sad?" [b]

46—49. (46) worshipped, offered reverent homage to. as to a superior being.[a] oblation, *etc.*, we may be sure that Daniel would only allow these offerings to be made to his God.[b] (47) of a truth, the excited expression of the king's wonder and delight. (48) ruler, or prince-president. chief, *etc.*, ch. iv. 9. (49) over the affairs, *i.e.* he gave them important political offices. in the gate,[c] where the court business was done.

Presents of perfumes.—Odoriferous ointments and perfumes were often presented by the great as a particular mark of distinction. The king of Babylon treated the Prophet Daniel with the richest perfumes, after he had predicted the future destinies of his empire, as a distinguished proof of his esteem and admiration: "Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and

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[c] *Shakespeare.*

[a] Comp Da. vii. 2; Re. xvii. 12.
[b] "Some explain thus. 'The chief power in these ten kingdoms shall be partly secular, and partly ecclesiastical, and the encroaching of the one upon the other shall endanger their existence.'"—*Lowth.*
[c] Comp. Ge. vi. 2.
[d] *Dr. Kitto.*

[a] "A stone from the holiest of mounts—the heavenly Zion—looses itself and falls. If it destroys the earthly material that it strikes, it brings also with it that new, pure heavenly spirit and material wh. shall fill again the earth with a stronger mount, and found a new and better city, Zion."—*Ewald.*
Lu. xx. 17, 18; Mat. xxi. 44.

[a] v. 44. *Bp. Halifax, Warb. Lec.* 66; *B. Harrison, Warb. Lec.* 24.
[b] *Bailey.*

[a] Comp. Da. vi. 8.
[b] Comp. Ac. xxviii. 6.
[c] "The 'Sublime Porte,' or Gate, denotes the Sultan's Government, his councils being formerly held in the entrance of his palace."—*Fausset.*
"This was merely a mark of dis-

worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him." This passage Mr. Harmer considers as exceedingly difficult; and he labours hard to prove that the king meant nothing more than civil respect. "Nebuchadnezzar, in all this matter, appeared to have considered Daniel merely as a prophet: his words strongly express this, Your God is a God of gods; and had it been otherwise, a person so zealous as Daniel, who risked his life rather than neglect his homage to his God, and had the courage to pray to Him with his windows open towards Jerusalem, contrary to the king's command, would undoubtedly, like Paul and Barnabas, have rejected these odours." This view completely vindicates the Prophet from the charge of conniving at the idolatry of the king; but it is not necessary to his defence. The conduct of Nebuchadnezzar, it is allowed, admits of a favourable construction; but, at the same time, it is scarcely possible to avoid the suspicion that he was, on this memorable occasion, guilty of idolatrous veneration. The verb *Saqad*, "he worshipped," so far as the writer has been able to trace it, both in Hebrew and Chaldee, expresses the homage which is rendered to a god, and is, perhaps, universally applied to the worship of false deities in the sacred Scriptures. If this remark be just, it is greatly to be suspected that Nebuchadnezzar, who had few or no correct religious principles to restrain the sudden movements of his impetuous passions, did intend on that occasion to honour Daniel as a god, or, which is not materially different, to worship the divinity in the prophet. But it may be demanded, How then is Daniel to be vindicated? Shall we suppose that a prophet of the Lord, a man highly favoured and distinguished for his eminent holiness, would suffer idolatry to be practised in his presence, more especially when he himself was the object of it, without expressing his disapprobation? To this objection the following answer is offered: The sacred writers, studious of extreme brevity, often pass over many incidents in the scenes which they describe. Daniel, therefore, might actually reject the intended honour, although it is not mentioned in the record. This silence of the historian will not prove that it was not done, while there are certain circumstances in the narrative which go far to prove that the Prophet did reject the homage of Nebuchadnezzar. In the twenty-eighth verse of the second chapter, he solemnly declares before the king and the whole court, that "it is the God of heaven that revealeth secrets, and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days;" and the thirtieth verse, "But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living." When these faithful declarations are considered, it is not to be supposed that Daniel neglected to remind the king that religious worship is due to God alone; and that such a testimony was given at the time, is intimated with considerable clearness in the confession of the king himself, verse forty-seventh, which seems to refer to something the Prophet had just said to him: "The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a Revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret." The character of Daniel, therefore, is not affected by the misconduct of his sovereign in paying him Divine honours.[d]

tinction bestowed on him, of common occurrence, such as burning frankincense and other perfumes in a chafing dish, wh. was frequently done in honour of distinguished guests, just as presents were bestowed upon them."—*Gadsby.*

"*Senses: doors for sin.* — The senses are the cinque-ports by which sin is let out and taken in. The ingress and egress of sin is by the senses, and much of our danger lieth there, partly because there are so many objects that suit with our distempers, that do by them insinuate themselves into the soul, and therefore things long since seemingly dead will soon revive again and recover life and strength."—*Manton.*

d Paxton.

"There are some men who are fortune's favourites, and who, like cats, light for ever upon their legs. Wilkes was one of these didappers, whom, if you had stripped naked and thrown over Westminster bridge, you might have met on the very next day, with a bag wig on his head, a sword by his side, a laced coat upon his back, and money in his pocket."—*C Colton.*

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—3. (1) **image of gold,**[a] either representing Bel, the Bab. god; or, perhaps, Nebuc. himself. If the latter the king's purpose was political. **threescore cubits,** prob. the fig. was thirty-six and the pedestal twenty-four cubits.[b] **Dura,** or plain of the wall; prob. only a little distance from Bab., and convenient for assembling a great multitude.[c] (2) **princes,** satraps. **sheriffs,** Arab. *mufti;* men learned in the law.[d] (3) **stood before,** in front of; ready for the act of devotion required.[e]

Perfumes offered in homage.—To make a present of perfumes was deemed a mark of reverence and honour in the remotest times among the Orientals. Such an offering was made to Daniel with a view to do him great honour. Thus Herodotus also informs us that the persons who were sent to Ethiopia by Cambyses "were commissioned to deliver with certain presents a particular message to the prince. The present consisted of a purple vest, a gold chain for the neck, bracelets, an alabaster box of perfumes, and a cask of palm wine." To sprinkle the apartments and persons of the guests with rosewater and other aromatics still continues in the East to be a mark of respectful attention. (Matt. xxvi. 7; Mark xiv. 3.) The Emperor of China gave Master George Staunton, son of the secretary to Lord Macartney's embassy, his areca nut purse from his girdle with his own hand. The areca, or betel-nut tree, is one of the most beautiful of the palmyra tribe: it grows perfectly straight, with an elegant tuft of plumy branches on its summit, overshadowing the blossoms and fruit which are interspersed among them. There is a peculiar delicacy in the proportion and foliage of this tree, which makes it generally admired; the Indians compare it to an elegantly-formed and beautiful woman. There is the same allusion in Solomon's song: "How fair and how pleasant art thou, my love, for delights! thy stature is like a palm tree, and thy bosom like clusters of grapes."—*Oriental Memoirs.*

4—7. (4) **nations and languages,** intended to intimate the vast and varied extent of the Bab. empire;[a] including both Semitic and Aryan people. (5) **cornet,** or horn. **flute,** or pipe. **harp,** *cithara,* or guitar. **sackbut,** Lat. *sambuca,* a four-stringed instrument with a shrill tone. **psaltery,** kind of harp with strings below the sounding board.[b] **dulcimer,** Chaldee *sumponya,* a kind of bagpipe. **fall down,** prostrate themselves in the attitude of adoration. (6) **same hour,**[c] or at once. **furnace,** or oven; a kind of punishment peculiar to the Babs.[d] (7) **fell down,** yielding prompt obedience.

The fiery furnace.—This mode of putting to death was not unusual in the East in more modern times. Chardin, in his *Travels,* after speaking of the most common modes of punishing with death, says, "But there is still a particular way of putting to death such as have transgressed in civil affairs, either by causing a dearth, or by selling above the tax by a false weight, or who have committed themselves in any other manner. The cooks are put upon a spit and roasted over a slow fire (see Jer. xxix. 22), bakers are thrown into a hot oven. During the

a "Prob. a bust upon a pedestal, and not solid, but of some material covered with plates of gold." — *Arch. Rose.*
b "Nebuc. had just returned fr. finishing the Jewish and Syrian wars, the spoils of which would furnish the means of rearing such a colossal statue." —*Prideaux.* *Herodotus* mentions a similar image, forty feet high, in the temple of Belus, at Babylon.
c "*Oppert* has identified the spot, and found a large square pedestal of brick, which may be the remains of the pedestal."—*Wordsworth.*
d Gesenius.
e "From the inscriptions it is clear how great stress was laid on attendance on the great relig. ceremonies; not to take part in them when present was equivalent to open rebellion and even sacrilege."—*Spk. Com.*
f Forbes.

a "Whatsoever part of the empire ye come from, and whatever language you speak." — *Lowth.*
b "Such harps are found in Egyptian and Assyrian monuments."—*Layard.*
c "The division of the day into twelve hours was received by the Babylonians, and

dearth in 1668, I saw such ovens heated on the royal square in Ispahan, to terrify the bakers, and to deter them from deriving advantage from the general distress."

8–12. (8) **certain Chaldæans**, prob. court officers, who were jealous of the Jews, who had been advanced to places of trust. **the Jews**,[a] those three Jews who had refused to render the required worship. Daniel does not seem to have been present. (9) **O king**, ch. ii. 4. (10) **a decree**, an expression of the king's will. (1`) **whoso**, without any exceptions. (12) **not regarded**, note how skilfully the accusation is framed so as to excite Nebuc.'s anger. It is made out that the Jews offered personal insult to Nebuc., as well as to his gods.[b]

The afflictions of believers.—If Christ suffers in His people, and if all the evil you cast upon God's people is Christ's, then all the good you do them is Christ's. If when you speak evil of God's people and reproach them, you reproach Christ; then when you speak well of God's people, you speak well of Christ. If when you persecute God's people, you persecute Christ; then when you relieve God's people, you relieve Christ; Christ will own the good that is done to His people, as well as the evil. As some in old time entertained angels unawares, so now do all the good you can to God's people, for unawares you may do much good to Christ.[c]

13–15. (13) **rage**, *etc.*, this indication of Nebuc.'s character indicates incipient insanity. (14) **true**, or of purpose;[a] is it designed? His rage does not prevent his seeking to be just, by making careful inquiries. (15) **now**, *etc.*, Nebuc. would give them the opportunity of correcting their mistake. **that God**, a distinct challenging of the power of Jehovah, whom the three Jews served.[b]

The boy martyr.—We are going to tell you about Cyril, who lived in the third century, at Cæsarea, in Cappadocia. Whilst still a child he learned to love the Lord Jesus; and in the midst of surrounding heathenism openly told he was a Christian. His young companions made game of him, and did him all sorts of evil; and in his own home he had much to endure. His father, who hated the very name of Christ, beat him, and did all in his power to make him deny the Lord Jesus; but finding nothing would induce him to do so, he expelled him from his home. He was brought before the Roman judge, who, seeing he was young, took pity on him, and advised him to "be wise, and go home." "I am willing," said the boy, "to receive reproach for the sake of Christ. My father has turned me out of his house, but God will receive me. I shall have a better mansion. 'To me to live is Christ, but to die is gain.'" He was then ordered to be bound, and led off to the stake; the soldiers, however, being told to bring him back again, for no one doubted that, when the boy saw the flames, his courage would fail and he would yield. But no. "Your fire and your sword do not frighten me," said the boy. "I go to a better home, to greater riches, than you can offer. Kill me quickly that I may go home." Seeing the onlookers weeping, he said, "Ye should rather rejoice. Ye know not what a city I am going to inhabit—what a hope is mine!" And so, amid the tears of the whole city, the noble boy went to win the martyr's crown. Surely his constancy and bold

passed fr. them into Greece."—*Herodotus.*

d Je. xxix. 22.

a "The word trans. 'accused' is a singular one, *lit.* meaning, 'ate the pieces of the Jews,' *i.e.* they calumniated, they slandered, they informed against them."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The Bab. and Assyr. exacted from the nations, which they conquered, submission to their own gods."—*Wordsworth.*

c *F. Burroughs*, 1650.

a "Is it of set purpose or design?"—*Gesenius.*

"Is it with *malice prepense*, or in scorn?"—*Fuerst.*

b Ex. v. 2; 2 Ki. xviii. 35.

"Youth is not the age of pleasure. We then expect too much, and we are, therefore, exposed to daily disappointments and mortifications. When we are a little older, and have brought down our wishes to our experience, then we become calm and begin to enjoy ourselves."—*Lord Liverpool.*

"The fairest flower in the garden of creation is a young mind, offering and unfolding itself to the influence of Divine wisdom, as the

heliotrope turns its sweet blossoms to the sun." —*Sir J. E. Smith.*

confession of Jesus must have spoken home to the hearts of the young in that age; it should do the same to youthful readers now.

16—18. (16) **not careful,**[a] *i.e.* we need not take any time for deliberation: our mind is fully made up: we commend the matter to our God, whom you challenge. (17) **will deliver,** the language of firm faith, that gives calmness and courage. (18) **if not,** this shows that they had no *knowledge* of what God would do for them, only their faith in Jehovah as sure to stand by the right.

Active religious principles (*v.* 18).—I. The principles for which we contend should be true. II. True principles should be maintained against all opposition. 1. They had to contend against the authority of the king: 2. They were under great obligations to the king; 3. Universal example was against them; 4. Disobedience was to be followed by tremendous punishment. III. Truth should be maintained in the spirit of love. If we fail in this—1. We injure our cause before men; 2. We deprive ourselves of Almighty help. IV. There are abundant encouragements for us thus to maintain true principles. V. Glorious results will follow the consistent maintenance of right principles.[b]

A noble resolve.—A heathen king had a pious bishop brought before him, and demanded that he should renounce his belief, and bow down before the idols. But the bishop refused, and said, "No, king; that will I never do." Rage seized the king, and he cried out, in ire—"Dost thou not know that thy life is in my hands, and that I can kill thee? A word from me, and it is done." "That I well know," answered the bishop; "but first allow me to relate to you a parable, and beg you to answer me a question. Suppose that one of thy truest and most faithful servants fell into the power of thine enemies, and they, trying to shake his faith in thee, should seek to make him a traitor to thee and thy house; but not being able to destroy his faithfulness, should then strip him of his raiment, and chase him away with mockery; say, oh king, when he came thus naked to thee, wouldest thou not give him the costliest garments, and cover him with honour?" The king replied, "Most assuredly I should; but what has this to do with the question?" And the bishop answered, "Now see. Thou canst strip me of my earthly body, but I have a Lord who will clothe me anew. Shall I, then, value my raiment more than my faith?" The king was silent. At last he spoke: "Go; thy life be spared!"

19—21. (19) **visage,** face; the expression of his countenance. **seven times,** seven is here used as the ideal number. The furnace was to be heated as hot as it could be heated.[a] (20) **most mighty,** it required brave men to venture near enough to cast them in. The flames, driven by the wind, would put in peril those who ventured near. (21) **coats,** or mantles. **hosen,** not stockings, wh. are seldom worn in the East: but inner tunics. **hats,** or turbans.[b]

Palissy and Henry III.—Bernard de Palissy, a native of Agen, in France, was a maker of earthenware at Saintes, and distinguished himself by his knowledge and talents. He was a Calvinist; and the French king, Henry III., said to him one day, that he should be compelled to give him up to his enemies

"The youth who hopes th' Olympic prize to gain, all arts must try, and every toil sustain." —*Horace.*

a "They keep their temper admirably well, do not call the king a tyrant or an idolater, but, with an exemplary calmness, and sedateness of mind, they deliberately give in their answer, which they resolve to abide by." — *Matthew Henry.*

2 Ti. iv. 17.

b *E. Thompson.*

Rev. Mr. Bailey, when but a little boy, used to lead his family in prayer. His father, a very wicked man, was struck with conviction, which led to his conversion, from this fact. Dr. Watts and Rev. Joseph Alleine were celebrated for youthful piety.

a "Passion overdoes and defeats its own end, for the hotter the fire, the sooner were they likely to be put out of pain."—*Fausset.*

b Some render, "Their shirts, their tunics, and their mantles."

According to Herodotus the dress worn in Babylon consisted of an under linen gar-

unless he changed his religion. "You have often said to me, sire," was the undaunted reply of De Palissy, "that you pitied me; but as for me, I pity you, who have given utterance to such words as 'I shall be compelled.' These are unkingly words; and I say to you, in royal phrase, that neither the Guises, nor all your people, nor yourself, are able to compel an humble manufacturer of earthenware to bend his knee before statues."

ment reaching to the feet, a woollen garment over it, and a woollen mantle.

22, 23. (22) **urgent**, requiring instant obedience. **flame**, roaring from the furnace, and driven against them.[a] (23) **fell down**, they had been hurriedly flung in, so they fell right into the very midst of the flames. **bound**, and so helpless to deliver themselves, or each other. Every point makes the miraculous deliverance more wonderful.

Probation.—There is a certain sweetness in one's seeing himself upon his trials for heaven, and standing candidate for glory: there is a pleasure in travelling over these mountains where the Christian can see the prints of Christ's own feet, and the footsteps of the flock who have been before him. How pleasant is it to a saint in the exercise of grace to see how a good God crosseth his corrupt inclinations, and prevents his folly! Of a truth there is a paradise within this thorn-hedge. Many a time the people of God are in bonds which are never loosed till they be bound with cords of affliction. God takes them and throws them into a fiery furnace that burns off their bonds; and then, like the three children (Dan. iii. 25), they are loose, walking in the midst of the fire. God gives His children a potion, with one bitter ingredient; if that will not work upon them, He will put in a second, and so on, as there is need, that they may work together for their good; with cross winds He hastens them to their harbour. Worldly things are often such a load to the Christian that he moves but very slowly heavenward. God sends a wind of trouble that blows the burden off his back; and then he walks more speedily on his way, after God hath drawn some gilded earth from him that was drawing his heart away from God.[b]

[a] Comp. Da. iv. 24.

"Zinzendorf, when a boy, used to write little notes to the Saviour, and throw them out of the window, hoping that He would find them; such were his thoughts of Jesus and his love to Him."—*Phelps.*

"As I approve of a youth that has something of the old man in him, so I am no less pleased with an old man that has something of the youth."—*Cicero.*

[b] *Boston.*

24, 25. (24) **astonied**, *see* Ezr. ix. 3. **three men**, Nebuc.'s surprise seems chiefly to have concerned the presence of the guardian angel. (25) **no hurt**, from the fire. **Son of God**, or "a son of the gods,"[a] comp. *v.* 28. "Really it was the 'Messenger of the Covenant' who herein gave a prelude to His incarnation."

True souls (*v.* 25).—Here we have true souls—I. Immensely tried. II. Morally unconquerable. III. Essentially uninjurable. IV. Divinely accompanied.[b]

The martyr not alone.—In the ecclesiastical history of Socrates, there is mention made of one Theodorus, a martyr put to extreme torments by Julian the Apostate, and dismissed again by him when he saw him unconquerable. Ruffinus, in his history, saith, that he met with this martyr a long time after his trial, and asked him whether the pains he felt were not insufferable. He answered, that at first it was somewhat grievous, but after a while there seemed to stand by him a young man in white, who, with a soft and comfortable handkerchief, wiped off the sweat from his body (which, through extreme anguish, was little less than blood) and bade him be of good cheer, insomuch as then it

[a] "The Chaldæans believed in *families* of gods: Bel, the supreme god, accompanied by the goddess Mylitta, being the father of the gods; thus by the expression Nebuc. meant, *one sprung from and sent by the gods*."—*Fausset.*

"The king saw in that flame fed by human sacrifice the greatest and most active of the gods with whom the priest had direct communication by sacred rites, and

magic incantations; and he recognised the intervention in favour of his victims." — *Spk. Com.*

b Dr. Thomas.

c Spencer.

Christians may be living far away from one another, and yet be one in Christ; just as lines through the centre of a circle may be at a great distance one fr. another, and yet all meet in one point.

There is no contending with necessity; and we should be very tender how we censure those that submit to it. It is one thing to be at liberty to do what we will, and another thing to be tied up to do what we must."— *Sir R. L'Estrange.*

"A broken fortune is like a falling column; the lower it sinks, the greater weight it has to sustain."— *Ovid.*

a Ps. lxxxix. 3, xcv. 3, cxiii. 5.

b "This decree promulgated throughout the vast empire of Nebuc must have tended much to keep the Jews from

was rather a punishment than a pleasure to him to be taken off the rack, sith when the tormentors had done the angel was gone. Thus it is that the blessed angels of God have ministered from time to time to His people, in the days of their distress; it may be bringing food to their bodies, as once to Elijah; but certainly comfort unspeakable to their souls, as to Jacob, Hagar, Daniel, Zacharias, Joseph, Cornelius, Paul, etc., and to our modern martyrs, in their prisons, at the stake, and in the fire. They pity our human frailties, and secretly suggest comfort, when we perceive it not; they are as ready to help us as the bad angels are to tempt us: always they stand looking on the face of God to receive orders, for the accomplishment of our good, which they no sooner have than they readily despatch, even with weariness of flight.[c]

26, 27. (26) **mouth**, or door. **servants**, *etc.*, acknowledging thus that their God had proved Himself mightier than all the gods of Babylon. **come forth**, he recognises that it was reality, not a vision, which he had seen in the furnace. (27) **saw**, *etc.*, so the miracle became a witness for Jehovah to all the vast nation.

Polycarp's martyrdom.—When Polycarp was brought to the tribunal before whom he was tried, the pro-consul asked him if he was Polycarp; to which he assented. The pro-consul then began to exhort him, saying, "Have pity on thine own great age: swear by the fortune of Cæsar; repent; say, Take away the Atheists" (meaning the Christians). Polycarp, casting his eye solemnly over the multitude, waving his hand to them, and looking up to heaven, said, "Take away these Atheists;" meaning the idolaters around him. The pro-consul still urging him, and saying, "Swear, and I will release thee—reproach Christ," Polycarp said, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He hath never wronged me, and how can I blaspheme my King, who hath saved me?" "I have wild beasts," said the pro-consul, "and will expose you to them unless you repent." "Call them!" said the martyr. "I will tame your spirit by fire," said the Roman. "You threaten me," said Polycarp, "with the fire which burns only for a moment, but are yourself ignorant of the fire of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly." Soon after, being bound on the burning stake, he exclaimed, "O Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ! O God of all principalities and of all creation! I bless Thee that Thou hast counted me worthy of this day, and of this hour, to receive my portion in the number of the martyrs, in the cup of Christ. I praise Thee for all these things; I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, by the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, Thy well-beloved Son, through whom, and with whom, in the Holy Spirit, be glory to Thee, both now and for ever. Amen."

28—30. (28) **blessed**, *etc.*, comp. ch. vi. 26. **changed . . word**, making it of none effect; or made it necessary for the king to withdraw his word, or decree. (29) **amiss**, *etc.*, Jehovah was to be reverently acknowledged,[a] but Nebuc. does not intend to change the national religions. **cut in pieces**,[b] ch. ii. 5. (30) **promoted**, to higher and more responsible state offices.[c]

The power of youthful piety (*v.* 28).—Consider the piety of

these young men. I. In its principles. 1. Their attachment to God was natural and therefore strong; 2. It was individual; 3. It was uniform. II. Its manifestation was wonderful if we consider—1. Their destitution of religious means; 2. The strength of their temptation; 3. The tenderness of their age; 4. Their number was small. III. Its impressions on those who witnessed it. 1. The king admired their character; 2. Called attention to it; 3. Blessed God; 4. Promoted them.[d]—*The Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace* (*v.* 28).—Let us notice—I. Their fidelity. 1. They were certainly under great temptation to comply with the wishes of the king; 2. But they manfully withstood the royal edict. II. Their recompense. See how God interposed for them. 1. Whilst it was executing; 2. After it was executed; 3. After it was reversed. Learn—(1) What a mercy it is that we enjoy civil and religious liberty; (2) And if we are under the influence of Divine grace; (3) What a mercy it is to have God for our God.[e]

The fourth in the furnace.—Professor Eichorn has manifested a strong inclination to expel the Prophet Daniel from the sacred writings. As the difficulties which attend some representations in this Prophet ("fires which do not burn and an image strangely disproportioned" are especially selected) are among the professor's principal reasons, we could wish, before sentence were passed on the delinquent, that not only what we have just noticed in relation to his animals, but also the following hints in relation to some of his other subjects, were duly weighed, and accurately understood. The story of the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace would be much more within our comprehension if we knew the true form of what is denominated a furnace; it is usually conceived of as being somewhat like our tile-kilns, a solid, enclosed, brick building, with an aperture only for entrance, or at most with a doorway below and a vent above for the flame, smoke, etc. But the circumstances of the story do not warrant an edifice of this construction; for it appears that Nebuchadnezzar, still seated on his throne, saw the persons in the fire. Now this he could not do through the solid wall of such a building; neither could the flame, issuing from a narrow orifice, easily slay those men who threw in the Hebrews, the solid wall being between them and the fire. Either, then, the opening to this furnace, if it were a solid edifice, was large enough to admit of full view into it; or we must seek some other construction for it. We may carry this idea somewhat further, and infer the propriety of supposing Nebuchadnezzar to see throughout the structure; by consequence, the building had no covering; but was, at most, an enclosure of fire; or an area surrounded by a wall, within which the fire raged.[f]

idolatry in the captivity and henceforth."—*Fausset.*

c "It is the wisdom of princes to prefer and employ men of steadfastness in religion; for those are most likely to be faithful to them who are faithful to God, and it is likely to be well with them when God's favourites are made theirs."—*Mat. Henry.*

d *Caleb Morris.*

e *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"He that has no friend and no enemy is one of the vulgar, and without talent, power, or energy."—*Lavater.*

"What numbers live to the age of fifty or sixty years, yet, if estimated by their merit, are not worth the price of a chick the moment it is hatched!"—*Shenstone.*

A bloodthirsty soldier found a child upon the battle-field at the close of an engagement, and lifted his sword to slay him. The child cried out, "O Sir! don't kill me, I'm so little!" The plea of weakness saved him.

f *Taylor* in *Calmet.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—3. (1) peace, *etc.*, the usual form of E. salutation. This is a copy of the royal decree, or proclamation, made on the king's restoration to health.[a] (2) thought it good, or "it was seemly before me." signs, "tokens significant of God's omnipotent agency." (3) everlasting,[b] *see* ch. ii. 44.

Meaning of the kingdom of God.—The phrase "kingdom of

a "This royal decree was doubtless preserved in the archives of Bab. It was a State paper; and the accuracy of this

transcript could therefore easily be tested." — *Wordsworth.*

God" is, like some New Testament phrases, employed with some variety of signification—all the varieties, however, having a common relation. Sometimes the expression, "kingdom of God," implies the subjects of Christ's sceptre, the aggregate, the multitude of the "called, and faithful, and chosen"—that part of them that are on earth; and then it is called the kingdom of Christ in the world: and at other times that part which has arrived already in heaven, and then it is called the kingdom of glory. Sometimes the expression intimates the unearthly genius or constitution of Christianity; as where the Saviour says, "My kingdom is not of this world." At other times, the expression implies the privileges, and endowments, and enjoyments experienced and exemplified under the administration of Messias; as "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." At other times, it implies the simple Gospel message, the announcement of revealed truth—the dispensation, the promulgation of the Gospel itself; as where it is said, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." [c]

δ Ps. x. 16, ciii. 19.

"What real good does an addition to a fortune already sufficient procure! Not any. Could the great man, by having his fortune increased, increase also his appetites, then precedence might be attended with real amusement."—*Goldsmith.*

[c] *Dr. Beaumont.*

4—7. (4) **at rest,** having finished his wars, and holding undisputed possession of the world. **flourishing,** like a tree. At full ease and prosperity. (5) **afraid,** though he did not understand it, he felt that there was something ominous about it. (6) **made a decree,** or issued a command. **wise men,** a part of whose profession it was to interpret dreams.[a] (7) **magicians,** ch. ii. 2.

[a] "The king's request was a fair one when addressed to men whose elaborate system of augury contained tables of omens from dreams, as well as the interpretation of every possible dream."—*Spk. Com.*

World of dreams.—

The world—the dreary world of dreams!
Why must the spirit tread
All night, beside its moaning streams,
And alleys of the dead?—
Must he who rises up to grieve,
Lie down again to weep?
Oh! for the long and quiet eve
Which brings the heavy sleep,
That lays the faint and aching head,
At length, upon a dreamless bed!

And yet, in youth, how beautiful
Was that enchanted land!
What matchless flowers I used to cull
Within its haunted strand!
What gorgeous visions spread the wing
Amid its twilight shades;
And oh! what shapes went, beckoning,
Along its moon-lit glades!
The dewy showers and silver gleams
That sweeten'd all the land of dreams!

Alas, the world of rest! it takes
Too much the day-world's part,—
Alike—to him who sleeps or wakes—
The shows it brings the heart;
Still, as the waking eye grows dim,
The dreaming gathers gloom,—

"A man with a half-volition goes backwards and forwards, and makes no way on the smoothest road; a man with a whole volition advances on the roughest, and will reach his purpose if there be even a little wisdom in it."—*Carlyle.*

"I shall see the winged vengeance overtake such children."—*Shakespeare.*

"Veracity is the correspondence between a proposition and a man's belief. Truth is the correspondence of the proposition with fact."—*F. W. Robertson.*

But sleep has not a ghost for him
Whose world has not a tomb :
The shadows of life's outer sky
Make darkness for the dreamer's eye !

The land of dreams ! how sad it is,
Upon that silent shore,
To meet the eye whose glance, in this,
Shall meet me never more !
Ah ! why must midnight's grief or fear
Replace the day's despair ;
Or they who went, to grieve me here,
Come back, to grieve me there ;
Or voices fill mine eyes with tears
Whose silence has been wept for years ?

And so, I touch the dreaming land
Upon its wildest shore.
A dreary sea and dreary strand,—
The spirit's Labrador :
Oh ! never more its flowery heights
Stand out to meet mine eyes ;
And, most of all, youth's guiding lights
Have fallen from life's skies ;
And Hope, that was my pilot then,
Will never sail with me again !

"Eternal vigilance is the price of safety," were the magnetic words of Patrick Henry that ushered in the successful war of the Revolution. A like watchfulness is necessary to the success of the Christian.

"Fortune, to show us her power in all things, and to abate our presumption, seeing she could not make fools wise, she has made them fortunate." —*Montaigne.*

8, 9. (8) **came in**, or was called in. Prob. as president of the province he was no longer classed with the magicians, and so had to be specially called in the emergency. **name . . god**, Bel, or Beltis. **holy gods**, this is Nebuc.'s view. Daniel would say, "the spirit of the one and only God."[a] (9) **master**, not in office, but in the sense of being able to do what they could not do.

Importance of piety in youth.—If the tree is permitted to grow up and to grow old, with the intention of making it new then, there is danger lest, through storms or fire or war, it may be suddenly destroyed. And even though it were protected from all these risks, it is strange that any one should deliberately desire that the soil and sun and air should be enjoyed by that tree, and wasted in bearing bitter fruit all the days of its strength, and only make a good tree in its old age, when it scarcely has sap sufficient in its veins to bear any fruit at all. See, reader, in this plain parable, how foolish, how false, how blasphemous, is the desire that throbs cowardly and covertly in many young hearts, to waste the broad sunny surface of life in sin, and throw a narrow strip of its withered, rugged edge at last as an offering to God ! If you have no desire to be good and do good throughout the life on earth that lies before you, how can you desire to be good and do good in the eternity that lies beyond ? Be not deceived. He who is weary of sin wants to be quit of it now, and instantly to enjoy a new life. He who says he wants to be holy, but would rather put off the date of the change, lies to himself, and to the world, and to God.[b]

[a] "The language of the king constantly vacillates bet. polytheism and monotheism, but he never admits one God to the exclusion of all others; his monotheism only implies that one God is supreme among many."—*Arch. Rose.*

According to a tradition current among the natives of Puerto Rico, there was an island of the Bahama group which had upon it a marvellous fountain, whose waters produced perpetual youth. For this marvel of nature, Juan Ponce de Leon, the Spanish navigator, sought long and earnestly, yet in vain.

[b] *Arnot.*

"The best rules to form a young man, are to talk little, to hear

10—12. (10) **a tree**, for the fig. comp. Ezek. xxxi. 3. **midst**, middle, or centre. (11) **grew**, *etc.*, symbol of the rise of Nebuc.'s own power. **unto heaven**, a strong fig. for a great height.

much, to reflect alone upon what has passed in company; to distrust one's own opinions, and value others that deserve it." —*Sir W. Temple.*

"Pleasure has been the business of my life, and every change of fortune easy to me, because I still was easy to myself."—*Dryden.*

(12) **meat**, or food, a general term. **beasts**, *etc.*, symbol of the subjects of Nebuc.'s kingdom.

Trees.—Trees of the pine and fir tribes, when cut down, do not send up fresh stems, like broad-leaved trees in general; but their roots immediately begin to decay. . . . The magnificent cedar of Lebanon might have been looked upon by Nebuchadnezzar as a suitable emblem of his own glory and power, but it cannot have been this tree that he saw in his dream,—a tree that grew "and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth." Had it been a resinous tree, a cedar, pine, or fir, it would have been in vain to have left the "stump of his roots in the earth," until "seven times" would "pass over him," expecting that vitality would again show itself. It must, therefore, have been a broad-leaved tree, having the power, which trees of the fir tribe do not possess, of forming fresh buds, and putting forth fresh branches at any part of the stem, and at any time when the flow of sap has been accidentally stopped. This idea is confirmed by the statement that it was a fruit-producing tree, affording "meat for all." Bearing fruit, and growing afresh when cut down, are properties that apply conjointly to some trees, and there are other trees to which neither of them can properly apply.[a]

[a] *Gorrie.*

13—15.* (13) **watcher**, *etc.*, *i.e.* a holy watcher, an angel.[a] (14) **aloud**, or with might. **hew down**, all the branches. (15) **stump**, so that he may yet sprout again. **with a band**, fig. of restraints necessary in Nebuc.'s time of insanity. **in . . grass**, in the midst of. **portion . . beasts**, of whom, in his lunacy, Nebuc. would fancy himself one.

[a] The Bab. believed in guardian angels.

Angels (good and evil) our attendants.—

"Man hath two attendant angels,
Ever waiting at his side,
With him wheresoe'er he wanders,
Wheresoe'er his feet abide.
One to warn him when he darkleth,
And rebuke him if he stray:
One to leave him to his nature,
And so let him go his way.

"Two recording spirits, reading
All his life's minutest part,
Looking in his soul, and listening
To the beatings of his heart.
Each with pen of fire electric,
Writes the good or evil wrought;
Writes with truth that adds not, errs not,
Purpose, action, word, and thought.

"One, the Teacher and Reprover,
Marks each heaven-deserving deed;
Graves it with the lightning's vigour,
Seals it with the lightning's speed.
For the good that man achieveth—
Good beyond an angel's doubt—
Such remains for aye and ever,
And cannot be blotted out.

"Wine and youth are fire upon fire."—*Fielding*

"Intemperate youth, by sad experience found, ends in an age imperfect and unsound."—*Denham.*

Youth scatters its affections with a liberal hand, like a young heir, ignorant as yet of the value of his possessions.

"The youth, . . . yielding like wax, th' impressive folly bears; rough to reproof, and slow to future cares."—*Horace.*

"Youth is not like a new garment, which we can keep fresh and fair by wearing sparingly. Youth, while we have

"One (severe and silent Watcher)
Noteth every crime and guile,
Writes it with a holy duty,
Seals it not, but waits awhile,
If the evil-doer cry not—
'God, forgive me!' ere he sleeps,
Then the sad stern spirit seals it,
And the gentler spirit weeps."[b]

it, we must wear daily, and it will fast wear away." —*Foster.*

b P. Prince.

16—18. (16) **heart**, thoughts or ideas. **beast's heart**, the notions, and feelings, and tastes of a brute beast.[a] **seven times**, not a definite period, but the complete time Divinely allotted to him. (17) **decree**, or sentence. **basest**, or lowest in condition.[b] (18) **thou . . able**, the king's confidence is based on Daniel's former success.

Test of madness.—What, I may be asked, is my test of insanity? I have none. I know of no unerring, infallible, and safe rule or standard, applicable to all cases. The only logical and philosophic mode of procedure in doubtful cases of mental alienation, is to compare the mind of the lunatic at the period of his suspected insanity with its prior natural and healthy condition; in other words, to consider the intellect in relation to itself, and to no artificial *à priori* test. Each individual case must be viewed in its own relations. It is clear that such is the opinion of the judges, notwithstanding they maintained, as a test of responsibility, a knowledge of right and wrong. Can any other conclusion be drawn from the language used by the judges when propounding in the House of Lords their view of insanity in connection with crime? "The facts," they say, "of each particular case must of necessity present themselves with endless variety, and with every shade of difference in each case; and it is their duty to declare the law upon each particular case, upon facts proved before them: and after hearing arguments of counsel thereon, they deem it at once impracticable, and at the same time dangerous to the administration of justice, if it were practicable, to attempt to make minute applications of the principles involved in the answers given by them to the questions proposed." This is a safe, judicious, and philosophic mode of investigating these painful cases; and if strictly adhered to, the ends of justice would be secured, and the requirements of science satisfied.[c]

a "It is now conceded that the madness of Nebuc. agrees with the description of a rare sort of disease called Lycanthropy, of which our earliest notice is in a Greek medical writer of the 4th century after our Lord, in which the sufferer retains his consciousness in other respects, but imagines himself to be changed into some animal, and acts, up to a certain point, in conformity with that persuasion." —*Pusey.*

b 1 Sa. ii. 8; Lu. i. 52.

"We do not know what is really good or bad fortune." — *Rousseau.*

c Dr. Forbes Winslow.

19—22. (19) **astonied**, as one rapt, or entranced. He seems to have feared to tell the interpretation.[a] **hate thee**, such only as *they* will be pleased to hear. (20) **tree**, *v.* 10. (21) **leaves**, *etc.*, *v.* 12. (22) **thou**, the tree with the symbol of the king himself.

Senseless pride.—

"Pride (of all others the most dangerous fault)
Proceeds from want of sense, or want of thought.
The men who labour and digest things most
Will be much apter to despond than boast;
For if your author be profoundly good,
'Twill cost you dear before he's understood."[b]
* * * * *
"Though pride may show some nobleness
When honour's its ally,

a "Being amazed and distressed by the dreadful calamity wh. he saw was portended by the vision, he felt tender compassion for his king and benefactor." —*Wordsworth.*
"Youth is ever apt to judge in haste, and lose the medium in the wild extreme." —*Aaron Hill.*

b Roscommon.

Yet there is such a thing on earth
As holding heads too high!
The sweetest bird builds near the ground,
The loveliest flower springs low:
And we must stoop for happiness,
If we its worth would know."[c]

23—25. (23) **watcher**, *etc.*, *vv.* 13, 14. (24) **most High**, not the gods of Nebuc., but the One God of Daniel, who was Nebuc.'s God also, though unacknowledged. (25) **drive**, *etc.*, indicating force, used against the king's will. **dwelling . . beasts**, this was prob. done to humour his mania. **eat grass**, man cannot live on grass, so that other food must have been provided for him.

Exposure to heat of sun.—This was one of the miseries of Nebuchadnezzar, and a much greater one than the people in England imagine. Think of the state of the body and pores after being twelve hours in a blazing sun, and then think on such a dew falling as will saturate all the clothes, and a tolerable view is gained of the great reverse, and the effect it must have on the human frame. Of a wretched man it is said, "The sun falls on his head by day, and the dew by night." "He is scorched by the sun, and made wet by the dew."[a]

26, 27. (26) **sure**, *i.e.* kept for thee, when the great lesson shall be learned, pride is broken down, and the living God acknowledged. (27) **acceptable**, so that you at once give practical heed to it. **break**, *etc.*, make an end of thy sins by a change of life. **mercy . . poor**, these Nebuc. may have crushed by exactions of forced labour. **lengthening**,[a] bec. God may, if He will, delay judgment when there are signs of repentance.[b]

Necessity of contrition.—Take the cold iron, and attempt to weld it, if you can, into a certain shape. How fruitless the effort! Lay it on the anvil, seize the blacksmith's hammer with all your might, let blow after blow fall upon it, and you shall have done nothing; but put it in the fire, let it be softened and made malleable, then lay it on the anvil, and each stroke shall have a mighty effect, so that you may fashion it into any form you may desire: so take your heart, not cold as it is, not stony as it is by nature, but put it into the furnace; there let it be molten, and after that it can be turned like wax to the seal, and fashioned into the image of Jesus Christ.[c]

28—30. (28) **came**, not at once, but when, having forgotten the warning, his heart was lifted up in pride.[a] (29) **twelve months**, prob. a time of peace during wh. Nebuc. was concerned with the adornment of the capital. **palace**, to this the king's special attention had been given.[b] (30) **spake**, giving actual expression to the proud thoughts he cherished. **this**, prob. referring exp. to the grand palace as the very centre of the kingdom. **built**,[c] here not meaning "founded," but "restored and enlarged." In this *v.* the words *I, my*, are emphatic.

The pride of Nebuchadnezzar (*v.* 30).—Three things I note in this saying. I. What a glorious opinion Nebuchadnezzar had of his vain building. 1. Out of these words, "Is not this great Babel?" 2. Out of these words, "Which I have built by the might of my power:" wherein he termeth himself the founder

c Swain.

"It requires greater virtues to support good than bad fortune."—*La Rochefoucauld.*

The young should be spared from sorrow as much as possible. Never dim the sunshine of hope and joy, so as to leave them without even the memory of its glory.

a Roberts.

a Or, a healing of his error.

"O, I have ta'en too little care of this! Take physic, pomp; expose thyself to feel what wretches feel: that thou mayst shake the superflux to them, and show the heavens more just." — *Shakespeare.*

b 1 Ki. xxi. 29.

c Spurgeon.

a "The influence upon Nebuc. of the dream, as interpreted by Daniel, is not indicated in Scripture. Very poss. Nebuc. was offended and annoyed."

b "The 'Stand. Inscription' contains the following: 'I have adorned no part of Babylon—that city wh. is the

of it, as if he had done it all without a helper; 3. That in all his work he sought nothing but vainglory. Out of these words, "For the honour of my majesty." These three sins Nebuchadnezzar doth bewray in one brag; and in all these three we are so like, that the beasts were not so like him when he became a beast.[d]

Walking on the roof.—The custom of walking upon the roof in the cool of the day, to inhale the refreshing breeze, and to survey the surrounding scenery, may serve to explain a Scripture incident of considerable interest, which does not appear to have been generally understood. It is thus recorded in the prophecies of Daniel: "At the end of twelve months, he (Nebuchadnezzar) walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon." The true sense of the original is, "he walked upon the palace;" but this interpretation our translators have placed in the margin, as more doubtful than the other. If Nebuchadnezzar walked in some apartment of his palace, it is not easy to account for the proud and rapturous exclamation which suddenly burst from his mouth; we can see no proper excitement, no adequate cause; but if we suppose him walking upon the roof of his palace, which proudly rose above the surrounding habitations, and surveying the vast extent, the magnificence, and the splendour of that great city, the mistress of the world—its walls of prodigious height and thickness—its hanging gardens, reputed one of the most astonishing efforts of art and power—its glittering palaces; the Euphrates rolling his majestic flood through the middle of the place, shut in on both sides by strong bulwarks and doors of brass; it was quite natural for such a man to feel elated with the sight, and indulge his pride and arrogance in the manner described by the Prophet.[e]

31—33. (31) **while . . mouth,** the moment of pride becoming the moment of judgment.[a] **fell a voice,** this must have been heard by others. It did but recall the judgment of wh. Daniel had given warning. (32) **make thee,** better, *let thee*. Nebuc. would be allowed to indulge in whatever his disordered fancy might suggest. (33) **body was wet,** he persisted in going naked like the beasts. **hairs,** *etc.*, being neglected they would become matted together.[b] **nails,** *etc.*,[c] they had a tendency to curve round.

The fall of Nebuchadnezzar (*vv.* 31—33).—These three verses following declare this king's fall, when, and how, and from whom it was: "While the words were yet," etc., there is the time. "A voice," etc., there is the Judge. "O king," etc., there is the arraignment. "Thy kingdom," etc., there is the judgment. "He was driven from men," etc., there is the execution and manner of his punishment.[d]

The madness of Nebuchadnezzar.—The following is one of the more recent facts elicited by the learned and most valuable researches of Sir H. C. Rawlinson, and mentioned in the masterly *Bampton Lectures* of his brother, Rev. G. Rawlinson: "The account given by the Prophet Daniel of the madness Divinely inflicted upon Nebuchadnezzar, as a punishment for his pride and self-confidence, is familiar to every reader of the Bible. Those, however, who have made themselves acquainted with the general character of Assyrian inscriptions, and remember their uniformly boastful strain,—how victories are magnified, and defeats and failures ignored,—will hardly expect to find any

pupil of my eye—as I have the palace. That is the house which commands the admiration of men; it is the central spot of the country, high and elevated; it is the house of royalty in the country of Babylonia."—*Spk.Com.*

c "The words 'I have built' occur again and again in the inscription which is preserved in the British Museum."—*Wordsworth.*

vv. 29, 30. *F. Webb.* i. 45.

d H. Smith.

"When men will not be reasoned out of a vanity, they must be ridiculed out of it."—*Sir R L'Estrange.*

e Paxton.

a Comp. Ac. xii. 23.

b We cannot wonder that very little record of Nebuc.'s illness has been preserved. So humiliating a passage in the history of the great king would be omitted; but a sickness of his is mentioned by Berosus; and an interval in which he did none of his great works is noticed in the inscriptions.

c "The nails, so long as they are *cut*, grow unremittingly; when this is omitted, their growth is confined. In this case, as may be observed in the sick when long bedridden, the nails become

or 2 inches long and curve round the fingers and ends of the toes." —*Kölliker.*

v. 31. *S. Smith*, iii. 293; *T. Newlin*, i. 823.

v. 32. *Dr. R. Morrison*, 136; *W. Short*, 349.

v. 33. *Dr. T. Orton*, i. 235.

d H. Smith.

"Every man has just as much vanity as he wants understanding."-*Pope.*

monumental record of so humiliating a period in the life of the great king of Babylon. They will remember how carefully Sennacherib omits all mention of the miraculous destruction of his army from the annals of his reign inscribed on the slabs found at Kouyunjik; and they will not expect to find Nebuchadnezzar more humble or more truthful than Sennacherib. Yet, strange to say, the contrary is the case. The monarch himself seems to have recorded an event to which profane historians make no allusion. In an inscription known as the 'Standard Inscription' of the great Babylonian sovereign, occurs a remarkable passage, which is thus translated by Sir H. Rawlinson: 'Four years (?) . . . the seat of my kingdom in the city . . . which . . . did not rejoice my heart. In all my dominions I did not build a high place of power; the precious treasures of my kingdom I did not lay up. In Babylon, buildings for myself, and for the honour of my kingdom, I did not lay out. In the worship of Merodach, my god, the joy of my heart (?) in Babylon, the city of his sovereignty, and the seat of my empire, I did not sing his praises (?) and I did not furnish his altars (with victims), nor did I clear out the canals.'"

34—37. (34) **end . . days**, the "seven times" of the judgment. **lifted . . eyes**, the uplook is a sign of returning reason. Comp. man's eyes with the eyes of beasts. **understanding**,[a] or power of mental control; relation of will to the ordering of the mental associations. **everlasting**, *etc.*, ch. vii. 14. (35) **all . . nothing**, Is. xl. 15, 17. **what doest thou?** Job ix. 12; Is. xlv. 9. (36) **for**, this word is better omitted. **brightness**, or comeliness; prob. alluding to the proper feeling and sentiment of a man. **sought**, to receive directions for the government of the kingdom. (37) **King of heaven**, the characteristic name for Jehovah in this book. **pride . . abase**, this was the lesson wh. his humiliation was designed to teach.[b]

The dream verified and improved (*vv.* 34—37). — I. He acknowledges God as the Supreme Disposer of all events. II. He adores God for His dispensations towards himself. III. He warns others to avoid that sin which brought this calamity upon him. Exhort—1. All to search their hearts in reference to this sin: 2. To be thankful for that fidelity that strives to put them on their guard against it; 3. To humble themselves as Nebuchadnezzar did.[c]

Pride.—"The apprehension of cursed pride (the sin of young ministers and teachers) working in my heart," says Dr. Cotton Mather, "filled me with inexpressible bitterness and confusion before the Lord. In my youth, when some others of my age were playing in the streets, I was preaching to large assemblies, and I was honoured with great respect among the people of God. I feared (and thanks be to God that He made me fear) lest Satan was hereby preparing a snare and a pit for such a novice. I therefore resolved that I would set apart a day to humble myself before God for the pride of my own heart, and to supplicate His grace to deliver me from that sin and from the dreadful wrath it would expose me to."—The celebrated Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, who rose from a humble station in life to the highest rank, and passed through strange and trying vicissitudes, used these words as his motto, and ordered them to be engraven upon his tomb: "God's providence is my inheritance."

v. 34. *S. Smith*, iii. 293; *T. Newlin*, i. 823.

v. 35. *Dr. H. Draper*, ii. 545; *W. Richardson*, i. 33; *H. McNeill*, 275.

v. 37. *Dr. H. Smith*, 162.

a "I recovered the use of my reason, and became sensible of my dependence upon God, and lifted up mine eyes to heaven in a devout acknowledgment of His sovereign majesty, whose dominion alone is unchangeable, and endures for ever."—*Lowth.*

"By saying that his *reason* returned he intimates that he had not lost his human shape, but his rational mind." — *S. Jerome.*

b "It is a mark of true contrition to condemn oneself, and justify God."—*Faussel.*

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1—4. (1) **Belshazzar,**[a] prob. joint king with his father, who at this time was away at Borsippa. where he surrendered to Cyrus. **great feast,** kept an annual festival season, and regardless of the presence of an active enemy outside the walls. Cyrus waited this opportunity for his attack. **drank wine,** this was usually after the feasting. (2) **whiles . .wine,** or when excited with wine. **bring,** *etc.*, ch. i. 2. **drink therein,** not only putting sacred things to secular use, but intentionally insulting the God whose vessels they were. The word *father* in this *v.* should be *forefather*. (3, 4) **praised,** *etc.*, in their drunken insolence offering public insult to the King of heaven.

Belshazzar.—Some modern writers have denied that ever a king called Belshazzar existed. The Scripture narrative may be defended upon other grounds, but we would point our readers to the remarkable discovery made by Sir H. Rawlinson at Mugheir, the ancient "Ur of the Chaldees," in 1854. He found documents which prove that during the latter part of his reign Nabounedus joined his son with himself in the government, and gave him the title of king; the son's name was Bil-shar-uzur. This remarkable discovery very clearly proves that a Belshazzar reigned, and also shows why the third place in the kingdom was promised to Daniel: the father filled the first, the son the second. If, as was most likely, Nabounedus married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar was her son, we can understand the words used in ver. 11, 13, 18, 22, where Belshazzar is called the son of Nebuchadnezzar; grandsons, and even great-grandsons, are often in Scripture called sons.

5, 6. (5) **fingers,** perhaps the semblance of a hand. **over . . candlestick,** *i.e.* just where the light shone fully on the wall. **the plaister,** the word means "plain stucco."[a] (6) **countenance,** Chal. *brightness*, his excited look.[b] **joints,** *etc.*, "the vertebræ of his back."[c]

The awakening hour of conscience (*vv.* 5, 6).—I. That it is an hour that must dawn on the most obdurate natures. II. That it is an hour introduced by a Divine manifestation. III. That it is an hour associated with great mental distress. IV. That it is an hour which is sometimes the harbinger of eternal retribution.[d]

Stings of conscience.—The Earl of Breadalbane planned the massacre of Glencoe, and carried it into execution in the most cruel and dastardly manner. Macaulay, speaking of the effects produced upon the minds of the guilty perpetrators of this atrocious deed, says that "Breadalbane, hardened as he was, felt the stings of conscience or the dread of retribution. . . . . He did his best to assume an air of unconcern. He made his appearance in the most fashionable coffee-house at Edinburgh, and talked loudly and self-complacently about the important services in which he had been engaged among the mountains. Some of his soldiers, however, who observed him closely, whispered that all this bravery was put on. He was not the man that he had been before that night. The form of his countenance was changed. In all places, at all hours, whether he waked or slept, Glencoe was for ever before him."[e]

a "*Bil-shar-uzar*, on the monuments, the son and colleague of Nabunahid. The Chaldæan list of kings is Nebuc., Evil-Merodach, Neriglissar, Laborosoarchod, and Nabunahid. In Herodotus the interval is filled up by the one name of Labynetus."—*Stanley.*
"Rationalists must now retract the assertion that the last king of Babylon has a false name in Daniel, since it is now an admitted fact that the name of Belshazzar occurs on Bab. cylinders, as the eldest son of Nabunahit, the Nabonidus of Berosus, the Labynetus of Herodotus."—*Pusey.*
vv. 1—4. *E. Scobell*, 393.
v. 3. *E. Sandercock*, ii. 475.

a "The great candlestick wh. lighted up the pale stucco on the wall of the palace, to which the banqueting hall was attached."—*Stanley.*
"It may have been the candlestick taken from the temple at Jerus., and the nearness of the writing to it may intimate that the rebuke was directed against the sacrilege."—*Barnes.*

b "His colour and the flush of wine left his cheek, and a deadly paleness came over him."—*Arch. Rose.*

c *Gesenius.*

d *Dr. Thomas*

e *Ibid.*

7—9. (7) aloud, or with impatient instancy. read, so as to understand. scarlet, the colour of honour and high rank. chain of gold,[a] emblem of high office. Comp. our mayors' chains. third ruler, a striking expression, because Belshazzar was himself only the *second* ruler.[b] (8) king's wise men, those belonging to the court. not read, not decipher. (9) lords . . astonied, there was a "panic of the assembled spectators as they find themselves in the presence of an enigma which they cannot decipher."[c]

An ill conscience.—An ill conscience is no comfortable companion to carry with thee. An ill conscience is like a thorn in the flesh. A thorn in the hedge may scratch you as you pass by it, but a thorn in the flesh rankles with you wherever you go; and the conscience, the ill conscience, the conscience that is ill at ease, it makes you ill at ease. You cannot have peace so long as you have an evil conscience, so long as there is that continual monition flashing across your mind—Judgment cometh, death cometh; am I ready? Many a time when you go to your worldly scenes of pleasure, this conscience, like the finger writing on the wall of the palace of the king of Babylon, alarms and frightens you. You tell nobody about it. Strange thoughts strike across your mind. You have no rest. Can a man rest on a pillow of thorns? Can a man rest with the heartache? Can a man rest with his soul disturbed with the horrors of guilt? I tell thee there is no rest to thee till thou comest to Christ. He alone can calm a conscience.[d]

10—12. (10) queen, prop. *qucen-mother.*[a] reason . . words, this may mean, a message from the king, or a report of the excitement in the banqueting house. O king, the established mode of publicly addressing the royal person. (11) a man, *etc.*, one within thy reach. holy gods, this represents the common idea about Daniel.[b] He was possibly at this time in retirement, bec. out of favour at court.[c] father, forefather. master, *etc.*, ch. iv. 9. (12) doubts, or knots; intricate and difficult things.

Doubts (*note on v.* 12).—The margin (Chald.) has, instead of "doubts," "knots." A very difficult subject is called a *mudiche*, a knot! Thus the explaining of a riddle is called "untying the knot." Of a talented man it is said, "Ah! he is very clever, he can tie or untie any knot." Of a dream, it is asked, "Who can loose this knot?" Of any mysteries, or of deep plans, it is asked, "Ah! who can untie these knots?" "How difficult that passage was, but he soon unravelled the knot."[d]—In the copy of a patent given to Sir John Chardin by the king of Persia, we find it is addressed "To the lords of lords, who have the presence of a lion, the aspect of Deston, the princes who have the stature of Tahem-ten-ten, who seem to be in the time of Ardevon, the regents who carry the majesty of Ferribours, the conquerors of kingdoms, superintendents that unloose all manner of knots, and who are under the ascendant of Mercury," etc.[e]

13—16. (13) that Daniel, the man to whom the queen-mother referred. It is curious that the king should address him by his Jewish name. (14) heard of thee, the words plainly prove that Daniel was not an acting official in the court or kingdom of Belshazzar. (15) read, decipher. (16) dissolve doubts, *see* note on *v.* 12.

a Ge. xli. 42.

b Xenophon narrates that the Babylonians thought themselves secure, and laughed at the measures of the besiegers; therefore we need not be surprised that Belshazzar made this promise."—*Wordsworth.*

c Stanley.

v. 7. *W. Barrow*, ii. 165.

d S. Coley.

"Vanity is the foundation of the most ridiculous and contemptible vices—the vices of affectation and common lying." — *Adam Smith.*

a "The Sultana Validé; very possibly, the great *Nitocris*, the daughter of Nebuc., herself the architect of some of the great art works of the city."

b Da. iv. 8, 9, 18.

c "As Daniel was prob., according to Oriental custom, deprived of the office to wh. Nebuc. had promoted him, at the king's death, Belshazzar might easily be ignorant of his services."—*Fausset.*

d Roberts.

e Lurder.

"In the wildest anarchy of man's insurgent appetites and sins, there is still a reclaiming voice; a voice which, even

God and a guilty conscience.—Alcibiades thus expresses himself in speaking of Socrates:—"I stop my ears, therefore, as from the syrens, and flee away as fast as possible, that I may not sit down beside him and grow old in listening to his talk; for this man has reduced me to feel the sentiment of blame which I imagine no one could readily believe was in me; he alone inspires me with remorse and awe, for I feel in his presence my incapacity of refuting what he says, or of refusing to do that which he directs; but when I depart from him, the glory which the multitude confers overwhelms me. I escape, therefore, and hide myself from him, and when I see him I am overwhelmed with humiliation, because I have neglected to do what I have confessed ought to be done; and often have I wished that he were no longer to be seen among men." If such were the feelings excited by a near view of the character of Socrates, how much more overwhelming must be the feelings created by a view of the infinite purity of God by a guilty conscience? Hence the conduct of sinners who have any sense of Him. They will not abide in His presence. They escape away from Him in the forgetfulness of this world; but when, alas, they do get a view of Him through the eye of a guilty conscience, how do they wish there was no such a Being! And some of them, prevailed upon by their wishes, really say in their hearts, "There is no God."[a]

17—19. (17) **lets . . another,** as one who had openly insulted Jehovah Daniel would have nothing whatever to do with him or his gifts.[a] "There is more of respectful than of indignant pity in the words of his protest." (18) **O thou king,** a solemn direct address. **most high God,** whom Daniel proclaimed as the only God. Nebuc. had to learn in bitter humiliation whence his power really came.[b] (19) **whom he would,** the description of irresponsible authority.

Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon.—Nebuchadnezzar is the great monarch of the Babylonian empire, which, lasting only eighty-eight years, from B.C. 625 to B.C. 538, was for nearly half the time under his sway. The chief works ascribed to him by the ancient writers are the following. He built the great wall of Babylon, which, according to the lowest estimate, must have contained more than 500,000,000 square feet of solid masonry, and must have required three or four times that number of bricks. He constructed a new and magnificent palace in the neighbourhood of the ancient residence of the kings. He made the celebrated "hanging garden" for the gratification of his wife, Amyitis. He repaired and beautified the great temple of Belus, at Babylon. He dug the huge reservoir near Sippara, said to have been 140 miles in circumference and 180 feet deep, furnishing it with floodgates, through which its waters could be drawn off for purposes of irrigation. He constructed a number of canals, among them the *Nahr Malcha*, or "Royal River," a broad and deep channel which connected the Euphrates with the Tigris. He built quays and breakwaters along the shores of the Persian Gulf, and he at the same time founded the city of Deridotis, or Teredon, in the vicinity of that sea. To these constructions may be added, on the authority either of Nebuchadnezzar's own inscriptions or of the existing remains, the Birs-i-Nimrud, or great temple of Nebo, at Borseppa; a vast reservoir

when in practice disregarded, it is impossible not to own; and to which, at the every moment that we refuse our obedience, we find that we cannot refuse the omage of what ourselves do feel and acknowledge to be the best, the highest principles of our nature."—*Chalmers.*

"I feel within me a peace, above all earthly dignities, a still and quiet conscience." — *Shakespeare.*

a McCosh.

a "Daniel's address to Belshazzar is in a very different tone fr. that of his language to Nebuc. Belshazzar was at this time guilty of profane sacrilege against God, and the Prophet, as His minister, pronounced sentence upon him." —*Wordsworth.*

b **Da. iv. 35—37.**

v. 17. *T. Newlin,* 62.

"Humility is a virtue all preach, none practise, and yet everybody is content to hear. The master thinks it good doctrine for his servant, the laity for the clergy, and the clergy for the laity."—*Selden.*

"Conscience is the centre of the

soul, to which all moral good and evil has a tendency; it is an internal supervisor and guardian which a man always carries in his bosom."—*W. Bates.*

in Babylon itself, called the *Yapur Shapu*, an extensive embankment along the course of the Tigris, near Bagdad; and almost innumerable temples, wells, and other public buildings at Cutha, Sippara, Borsippa, Babylon, etc. The indefatigable monarch seems to have either rebuilt, or at least repaired, almost every city and temple throughout the entire country. There are said to be at least a hundred sites in the tract immediately about Babylon which give evidence, by inscribed bricks bearing his legend, of the marvellous activity and energy of this king.[c]

20, 21. (20) **hardened in pride**, ch. iv. 30. **deposed**, made to come down. This occurred not by the rebellion of his people, but by the direct visitation of God. (21) **driven**, *etc.*, ch. iv. 32.

Madness of Nebuchadnezzar.—While many such cases are recorded by Greek and Roman writers, the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar varied in this particular, that the beast chosen for imitation was a bull, and it is no improbable suggestion to offer that there may have been a special reason for this. The empire of this king extended to India, where, under the form of a bull, the chief Zend deity, Ahura Mazda, was worshipped. This divinity, as later researches have shown, became engrafted into the Chaldæan mythology, and was the sole author of good, physical and moral, in opposition to Ahriman, the power of evil (a doctrine revived in the second century by the Gnostics and Manichæes). In some unexplained way the sacred bull was identified with Ahura Mazda, the pure and holy; and it is not in any degree unlikely that Nebuchadnezzar's insanity might assume that into this idolised animal he himself was changed. It has been urged with much apparent plausibility that grass alone would not sustain a man, and that the human frame could not endure such a continual exposure. To which it is a sufficient reply to observe, that though a gramineous diet would not support life, a vegetable one will do so easily; and also that the sacred bulls of the Hindus are fed with rice, bread, and fruit, as well as herbs; while with respect to the incapability of the human body to sustain hardship and nakedness, the case of the famous wild boy, Peter of Arveiron, is a recent example to the contrary, and is a natural analogue to the condition of Nebuchadnezzar. Finally, were the difficulties in the way of the historic statement greater than they are, an ample reason for the whole is given in the sacret text: "This is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king."

Cynanthropy, Lycanthropy, and similar names, are given to the various hallucinations of this form of disease. Generally, the patient having been previously abnormally excited, suddenly seizes upon one engrossing idea, becomes absorbed with it, and after a few hours of delirium, howls like a wolf, or attempts to bark like a dog, and to imitate the gestures and habits of the animal he believes himself transformed into. In such a condition of mind the natural food of that animal would be preferred, and a corresponding violence of demeanour enforcing a great degree of neglect.

22—24. (22) **not humbled**, but instead hast only changed Nebuc.'s haughty pride for an insolent and utterly offensive form of pride. (23) **praised . . gods**, this was the insult which could not be passed over.[a] **whose . . ways**, Je. x. 23.[b] (24) **then**, *i.e.* just then; in the very moment when your insolent pride reached its climax.

The God of our life (v. 23).—I. Our dependence on God—1. For our existence: 2. For our well-being. II. The duty we owe to God in consequence of this dependence. 1. We ought to believe in Him and to love Him; 2. We ought to worship Him: 3. We ought to obey Him; 4. We ought to consult for His glory. III. Our neglect of this duty. 1. In some it is total; 2. In some it is partial; 3. In all it is heinous.[c]

c Rawlinson.

a "The language of Daniel here evidently implies that Belshazzar's use of these holy vessels in unholy revels was in the highest degree sacrilegious."—*Arch. Rose.*

b "Thou hast not given due honour to that Supreme Being who hath an absolute disposal, not only

Honour due to all.—There is a kind of respect due to the meanest person, even from the greatest; for it is the mere favour of Providence that he who is actually the greatest was not the meanest. A man cannot cast his respects so low, but they will rebound and return upon him. What heaven bestows upon the earth in kind influences and benign aspects, is paid it back again in sacrifice, incense, and adoration.[d]

25—28. (25) **Mene**, *etc.*, lit. "numbered, weighed, and dividers." *Upharsin* signifies "breakings," but in the sound of the word is a possible allusion to the Persians.[a] (26—28) **this**, *etc.*, *Peres* may mean, divided among the Medes and Persians; or, severed from thee. Upharsin is made up of the letter U, the Chaldee for the conjunction *and*, and a passive participle. *Pharsin* is plural; *Peres* is singular. At this time the Persians were the dominant race of those uniting under Cyrus.

The knell of a lost soul (*v.* 27).—I. God weighs the actions of all men. 1. God has the right; 2. He has the means; 3. He has the ability. II. With a uniform result. 1. In the case of Belshazzar we see the cause of this dreadful uniformity—wilful indifference to instruction, pride and hostility of heart, basest ingratitude, horrible profanity, open idolatry; 2. In the case of Belshazzar we see by what consequences this discovery is ultimately followed—the hand was withdrawn, the fact was publicly declared, the king was deprived of everything, he was slain. Learn:—We are wanting. (1) Can anything make up for that which is lacking? (2) Can sacrifices and penances? (3) Can excuses palliate? (4) Will promises suffice? (5) Only Christ will meet the need.[b]

Weighed in the balance.—Roberts remarks that this striking form of speech is much used in the East at this day. Thus, should two men be disputing respecting the moral character of a third person, one will say, "I know the fellow well; I have weighed him, and he is found wanting." "He found wanting! you are much lighter than he." "What, miscreant! do you wish to weigh against me." "Thou art but as one part in a thousand." "Begone, fellow, or I will soon weigh thee." "Yes, yes, there is no doubt about it; you have weighed me; I am much lighter than you." "What kind of times are these? the slaves are weighing their masters." "Yes, the low castes have become very clever; they are weighing their superiors." "What, woman! do you call in question the authority of your husband? are you qualified to weigh him?" "The judge has been weighing the prisoners, and they are all wanting."

29. **clothed**, *etc.*, prob. Daniel submitted, bec. he knew what would happen before the night was over.[a] **scarlet**, *i.e.* with a robe of scarlet colour.

Robes of state.—This was designed to honour Daniel, and certainly was, according to the custom of the East, a ceremony highly expressive of dignity. To come out from the presence of a superior in a garment different from that in which the person went in, was significant of approbation and promotion. Whether it was the precise intention of this clothing to declare Daniel's investiture with the dignity of the third ruler of the kingdom, or whether it was an honorary distinction, unconnected with his

of thy affairs, but even of thy life itself."—*Lowth.*

v. 23. *II. Grove*, i. 1.

c G. Brooks.

d South.

a "The whole passage is an instance of the early mode of exegesis. The explainer took each word, and added to it his comment."—*Ewald.*

"*Mene* carried with it the judgment that the days of the kingdom were *numbered* and *ended*; *Tekel* carried the doom that it was *weighed* and found *light*; *Peres* that it was *divided*, and given to the *Persians*, *Pharsin*."—*Stanley.*

b Stems and Twigs

"Even thus amid thy pride and luxury, O earth! shall that last coming burst upon thee, the secret coming of the Son of Man; when all the cherub-thronging clouds shall shine, irradiate with His bright advancing sign."—*Milman.*

a "Belshazzar desired to conciliate Daniel, and Daniel's God." — *Wordsworth.*

"As the capture of the city by Cyrus was not till near daylight, there is no want of *time* in that eventful night for accomplishing all that is here recorded."—*Faussett.*

b Burder.

a "Two deserters, Gadata and Gobryas, having assisted some of the Persian army to kill the guards and seize upon the palace, they entered into the room where the king was, whom they found standing up in a posture of defence; but they soon despatched him, and those that were with him." —*Xenophon.* Je. li. 39, 57.

b Xenophon relates that, after the capture of Bab., Cyrus marched to Media, and gave to Cyaxares rich presents, and offered to him Bab. as a royal residence; and Cyaxares, who had no son, gave him his daughter in marriage, and the kingdom of Media as a dowry.

c Rawlinson.

v. 30. *A. Williams*, iii. 373.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

"Though in many men conscience sleep in regard to motion, yet it never sleeps in regard to observation and notice. It may be hard and seared, it can never be blind. Like letters written with the juice of lemon, that which is written upon it, though seemingly invisible and illegible, when brought before the fire of God's judgment, shall come forth clear and expressive."—*M'Cosh.*

"Conscience, then, is that faculty whereby we are at once

advancement, cannot be absolutely decided, because caffetans, or robes, are at this day put on people with both views.[b]

30, 31. (30) **that night**, execution following on the very heels of judgment. **slain**, in his palace.[a] (31) **Darius**, this appears to be his official name: his real name was prob. Cyaxares II. To him Cyrus committed the government of the conquered Babylon.[b] Others think Darius was "a viceroy set up by Cyrus, of whom there is at present no trace in profane history."[c] **took**, receiving it as a trust from the conqueror, who desired to carry his army forward.

Belshazzar's death (*v.* 30).—Consider—I. The time of Belshazzar's death. It was the night—1. Of his feasting; 2. Of his impiety; (3) Of his warning. II. The instruction to be gathered from it. Learn—(1) Not to provoke the Lord to jealousy; (2) Not to despise the warnings you receive; (3) Not to delay the great work you have to do.[d]

The taking of Babylon.—Withdrawing the greater part of his army from the vicinity of the city, and leaving behind him only certain corps of observation, Cyrus marched away up the course of the Euphrates for a certain distance, and there proceeded to make a vigorous use of the spade. His soldiers . . . dug a channel or channels from the Euphrates, by means of which a great portion of its water would be drawn off; hoping in this way to make the natural course of the river fordable. When all was prepared, Cyrus determined to wait for the arrival of a certain festival, during which the whole population were wont to engage in drinking and revelling, and then silently, in the dead of the night, to turn the water of the river and make his attack. All fell out as he hoped and wished. The festival was even held with greater pomp and splendour than usual; for Belshazzar, with the natural insolence of youth, to mark his contempt of the besieging army, abandoned himself wholly to the delights of the season, and himself entertained a thousand lords in his palace (Dan. v. 1). Elsewhere the rest of the population was occupied in feasting and dancing (Jer. li. 39). Drunken riot and mad excitement held possession of the town; the siege was forgotten; ordinary precautions, as the closing of the river gates (Isa. xlv. 1), were neglected. Following the example of their king, the Babylonians gave themselves up for the night to orgies, in which religious frenzy and drunken excess formed a strange and revolting medley (Dan. v. 4). Meanwhile, outside the city, in silence and darkness (Dan. v. 30), the Persians watched at the two points where the Euphrates entered and left the walls. Anxiously they noted the gradual sinking of the water in the river bed (Isa. xliv. 27); still more anxiously they watched to see if those within the walls would observe the suspicious circumstance and sound an alarm through the town. Should such an alarm be given, all their labours would be lost. If, when they entered the river-bed, they found the river-walls manned, and the river gates fast locked, they would be indeed "caught in a trap." Enfiladed on both sides by an enemy whom they could neither see nor reach, they would be overwhelmed and destroyed by his missiles before they could succeed in making their escape. But, as they watched, no sound of alarm reached them—only a confused noise of revel and riot, which showed that the unhappy townsmen were quite unconscious of the approach of danger.

At last shadowy forms began to emerge from the obscurity of the river-bed, and on the landing-places opposite the river gates scattered clusters of men grew into solid columns; the undefended gateways were seized; a war shout was raised; the alarm was taken and spread, and swift runners started off to show the king of Babylon that his city was taken at one end (Jer. li. 31). In the darkness and confusion of the night a terrible massacre ensued (Jer. l. 30, li. 4). The drunken revellers could make no resistance. The king, paralysed with fear at the awful handwriting upon the wall, which too late had warned him of his peril (Jer. l. 43; Dan. v. 5—28), could do nothing even to check the progress of the assailants, who carried all before them everywhere. Bursting into the palace, a band of Persians made their way to the presence of the monarch, and slew him on the scene of his impious revelry. Other bands carried fire (Jer. l. 32, li. 30, 32, 58) and sword through the town. When morning came, Cyrus found himself undisputed master of the city, which, if it had not despised his efforts, might with the greatest ease have baffled them.[e]

conscious of our thoughts, words, and actions, and of their merit or demerit, of their being good or bad, and consequently deserving either praise or censure. And some pleasure generally attends the former sentence, some uneasiness the latter. But this varies exceedingly, according to education, and a thousand other circumstances."—*J. Wesley.*

e *Rawlinson.*

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—3. (1) **set . . princes,** or satraps; rulers who were like petty kings in their respective districts.[a] "Their duties—both civil and military—consisted, broadly speaking, in the supervision of the whole kingdom." (2) **presidents,** Chal. *sarac.*, prob. *head-man.*[b] **first,** possibly he took charge of the civil and financial business of the whole country; the other presidents being concerned with the military and legal and ecclesiastical business. The three presidents would constitute a kind of privy council. (3) **preferred,** *i.e.* the king showed him special favour and put increasing confidence in him. **excellent spirit,**[c] ch. v. 12. **thought . . realm,** some indication of this purpose excited the jealousy against Daniel.

Historical accuracy of Scripture.—The *Church Herald* says: We read in Dan. v. 30, that when Darius took Babylon, Belshazzar, the king of it, was in the city, and in "that night was Belshazzar, king of the Chaldæans, slain." Herodotus, the Greek historian, gives an account of the matter, which, until of late years, seemed totally irreconcilable with Daniel's narrative. He informs us that the king of Babylon, whose name was Labynetus, was absent when the city was taken; that he sought shelter in Barsippa; that Cyrus attacked him there, took him, stripped him of his regal dignity, but allowed him to retire and spend the rest of his life in ease in Caramansa. The two statements appear to be contradictory, and that the credit of historic veracity must be denied either to Daniel or to Herodotus. Thus stood the matter, when Sir Henry Rawlinson, the celebrated Oriental scholar, discovered, in his Eastern researches, one of those cylinders on which historic records used to be written in the cuneiform character by the ancients. Having deciphered the writing on this relic of antiquity, it was discovered that at the time of the capture of Babylon, referred to by Daniel and Herodotus, there were two kings presiding over the empire, a father and his son; and thus we can understand that Herodotus

a "When Cyrus was at Bab. it pleased him to send satraps to rule the conquered nations. Darius acted as the representative of Cyrus."—*Xenophon.*

"What is novel in this arrangement of the kingdom by Darius is not the number of princes, but the office of the three presidents."—*Ewald.*

b "Prob. descriptive of an office peculiar to the Medo-Persian government."—*Wordsworth.*

c "Daniel had gained great experience in the public affairs, it being now 65 years ago since he was first advanced by Nebuc."—*Lowth.*

One replied to unjust accusations thus, "I will rest henceforward in peace, in the house of

my own conscience; and if I do any good deeds, it is no matter who knows them; if bad, knowing them myself, it is no matter from whom I hide them; they will be recorded before that Judge from whose presence I cannot flee. If all the world applaud me, and He accuse me, their praise is in vain."

speaks of the father, who escaped, while Daniel speaks of the son, who was slain. This unsuspected fact not only reconciles the Prophet and historian, but explains an otherwise inexplicable expression in Daniel, where it was promised to the Prophet by Belshazzar that, if he could explain the writing on the wall, he would make him the third ruler in the kingdom. (Dan. v. 16.) Now, why not the second ruler, as Joseph in similar circumstances had been made in Egypt? The cylinder answers the question; there were two kings in Babylon, and therefore the place next to the throne could be only the third rulership in the kingdom. A very short time before the discovery which so triumphantly reconciles the seeming contradiction, which cast a shade of suspicion on Daniel's accuracy, Mr. F. W. Newman had written these words in Kitto's Cyclopædia, "No hypothesis will reconcile this account with the other;" an instructive lesson this, teaching us to give the sacred writers credit for accuracy, even though we may be unable to explain facts which seem to impeach it.

4, 5. (4) **occasion**, something of wh. they might take advantage so as to secure Daniel's destruction.[a] **faithful**, the first political virtue of government officials. (5) **concerning .. God**, in relation to his religion.[b]

The character of Daniel (*v.* 5).—Let me—I. Open to you the constituent parts of this character. Here we behold, in combined and unintermittent exercise—1. Piety; 2. Wisdom; 3. Consistency; 4. Firmness. II. Urge you all to the attainment of it. Let me invite you to consider—1. How it honours God; 2. How it disarms prejudice; 3. How it tends to the welfare of your own soul.[c]

Power of flattery.—

All-potent Flattery, universal lord!
Reviled, yet courted; censured, yet adored!
How thy strong spell each human bosom draws,
The very echo to our self-applause!
'Tis thine to smooth the furrow'd brow of Pique,
Wrinkle with smiles the sour reluctant cheek,
Silence the wrathful, make the sullen speak,
Disarm a tyrant, tame a father's curse,
Wring the slow farthing from the miser's purse,
Subdue Lucretia, even when gold shall fail,
And make Apicius smile o'er cheese and ale.[d]

6–9. (6) **assembled**, *marg.* "came tumultuously;" **as if** the matter was one of instant and pressing importance.[a] Daniel knew nothing of their plot, and prob. he could not interfere as the matter did not belong to *his department*. (7) **establish**, *i.e.* get the king to establish. **decree**, or interdict. **save of thee**, this shows that they represented the necessity for thus securing a universal acknowledgment of Darius's authority and rights.[b] **den of lions**, a kind of punishment not previously mentioned in the Bible. (8) **altereth not**, Esth. i. 19. (9) **signed**, usually documents were sealed, and stamping or sealing is prob. here intended.

Evils of flattery.—

A man I knew who lived upon a smile,
And well it fed him; he look'd plump and fair,

a Comp the efforts of the Pharisees to find occasion against our Lord.

b "We shall find 'occasion' against him concerning the law (Thorah) of his God if we can obtain from the king a decree wh. will make him transgress that law; he will not obey the king's command; and that will be our occasion."—*Rashi.*

Is. liv. 17.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d Pope.

a "Had they come more deliberately the king might have refused their grant; but they gave him no time for reflection, representing that their test decree was necessary for the safety of the king."—*Fausset.*

b In Persia the king is regarded as the image of

While rankest venom foamed through every vein ;
Living, he fawn'd on every fool alive ;
And, dying, cursed the friend on whom he lived.[c]

When Alexander the Great had received from an arrow a wound that would not heal, he said to his parasites, "You say that I am Jupiter's son, but this wound proves me a feeble man." Undeserved praise is always fatal in its effects on the vain-glorious dupe. More danger lurks in adulation than in abuse, since it is the slaver that kills and not the bite. They who are voracious of vain compliments, drink from a Circean cup, which first exhilarates to madness and then destroys.[d]

10—12. (10) **knew**, was informed. His enemies would be ready enough to give him such information. **windows**, *etc.*, this is stated to indicate that he made no change whatever in his habits.[a] **towards Jerus.**, 1 Ki. viii. 48. **three times**, Ps. lv. 17.[b] **as . . aforetime**, showing that when in full work, he had been a man of prayer. (11) **assembled**, *see* note on *v.* 6. "The spy-system was well organised among the Medo-Persians." (12) **hast**, *etc.*, these men sought a confirmation of the decree before they mentioned Daniel's name.

Daniel's devotions (*v.* 10).—I. Daniel's devotions. 1. He humbled himself when he prayed ; 2. He confessed his sins and the sins of his people ; 3. He deprecated punishment, and implored mercy ; 4. He pleaded with God ; 5. He gave thanks. II. The manner how he performed them. 1. He went into his house and into his chamber ; 2. He prayed and gave thanks three times a day ; 3. He kneeled upon his knees when he prayed ; 4. He looked towards Jerusalem when he prayed ; 5. His prayers were regularly performed. III. The peculiar circumstances in which he was placed. 1. He was in a foreign land ; 2. Surrounded by enemies ; 3. He was in high life ; 4. Involved in most important business ; 5. He was prohibited from praying. IV. The inferences to be drawn from the whole. 1. Whoever, wherever you are, prepare for temptation ; 2. Under no circumstances swerve from duty ; 3. The way of duty is the way of safety ; 4. Persecutors often defeat their own object ; 5. The wicked are snared in their own hands.[c]

Religious bravery.—One of the Irish Society's readers, knowing that his countrymen were perishing for lack of spiritual knowledge, began to supply that lack before he was known to the Society. This exposed him to much persecution. On one occasion he was brought into a room where a number of Roman Catholic gentlemen were assembled, who desired him to swear by a mass book, which lay upon the table, that he would never again read the Bible in public. One individual produced a case of pistols, and threatened to shoot him dead if he did not take the oath. Unbuttoning his coat, he opened his breast and said, "I am a poor sinner, and fear to offend my God ; but here is a heart that never dreaded man."

13, 14. (13) **that Daniel**, this expression seems to let out their spite. **children . . Judah**, some time ago a mere captive. **regardeth not**, simply bec. he regarded God, and he could not both obey God's law and the king's, and there could be no question which of the two he must choose. (14) **sore displeased**,[a] vexed at thus being overreached, for he saw that it was enmity

the good god, *Ormuzd.*

v. 7. *T. Morer*, 83.

c Young.

Those who before a glass look most at themselves, are apt to know least of themselves.

d E. L. Magoon.

a "On the roof of his house there was a chamber, with windows whose cross-bars or lattices could be shut or opened at pleasure."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Daniel did not court persecution : he did not run recklessly into danger, and tempt his enemies to the sin of accusing him. He retired to his upper chamber, his private oratory ; and his accusers pressed in upon his privacy violently and tumultuously."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 10. *T. Bradbury*, i. 245 ; *W. Reading*, iv. 171 ; *Bp. Horne*, ii. 197 ; *J. Bondier*, 207 ; *W. Jay*, iii. 330 ; *D. Brichan*, i. ; *Dr. H. Pearson*, 404 ; *J. G. Foyster*, 17 ; *T. Arnold*, iii. 265 ; *T. Jackson*, 44.

c Beta in 400 S'rs.

a "Having too late discovered that the princes, in procuring him to sign this decree, had no other aim but to

take advantage of it to the prejudice of Daniel." —*Lowth.*

towards Daniel, and not anxiety for the maintenance of his authority which had led to the plot. **laboured,** *etc.*, to find some pretext for not executing the decree.[b]

Protection of prayer.—Among the elegant forms of insect life, there is a little creature known to naturalists which can gather round it a sufficiency of atmospheric air, and, so clothed upon, it descends into the bottom of the pool, and you may see the little diver moving about dry and at his ease, protected by his crystal vesture, though the water all around and above be stagnant and bitter. Prayer is such a protector—a transparent vesture; the world sees it not; but, a real defence, it keeps out the world. By means of it the believer can gather so much of heaven's atmosphere around him, and with it descend into the putrid depths of this contaminating world, that for a season no evil will touch him; and he knows where to ascend for a fresh supply. Communion with God kept Daniel pure in Babylon. Nothing else can keep us safe in London. In the "secret of God's presence" you might tread these giddy streets, and your eyes never view the vanity. You might pass theatres and taverns, and never dream of entering in. You might get invitations to noisy routs and God-forgetting assemblies, and have no heart to go. Golden images, public opinion, with its lion's den; and fashion, with its fiery furnace, would never disturb you. A man of prayer in this mart of nations, you could pass upon your way unseduced and undistracted, a Christian in Vanity Fair, a pilgrim in a paradise of fools, a worshipper amidst idolaters, a Daniel in Babylon.[c]

15—17. (15) **assembled,** *vv.* 6, 11. **know, O king,** their tone was masterful now, for they felt able to compel the king to work their will. (16) **cast . . lions,** through the entrance by wh. food was put to them, or over the high wall surrounding their den.[a] **he will,** the king means, "I hope he will." (17) **stone,** it is difficult to understand the shape of the den, if its entrance was thus closed by a stone. **sealed it,** to secure that none opened it without due authority.[b]

The den of lions.—This is a new kind of punishment, not previously mentioned in Scripture; and that it first occurs here at Babylon is a remarkable fact, showing the accuracy of the sacred writers in their references to the manners and usages of different nations. We are not aware that any ancient writer mentions that the inhabitants of Babylon were in the habit of throwing offenders to be devoured by lions kept in dens for the purpose. But we have the still more conclusive evidence of monuments brought to light by modern travellers, on the sites not only of Babylon, but of Susa also, representing lions destroying and preying upon human beings. The first was found at Babylon, near the great mass of ruin which is supposed to mark the site of the grand western palace. It represents a lion standing over the body of a prostrate man, extended on a pedestal which measures nine feet in length by three in breadth. The whole is from a block of stone of the ingredient and texture of granite, the scale colossal, and the sculpture in a very barbarous style. The head has been lately knocked off; but when Mr. Rich saw it the statue was in a perfect state, and he remarks that "the mouth had a circular aperture into which a man might introduce his fist." The second is an engraved gem, dug from the ruins of

b "We often do that, through inconsideration, which afterwards we see cause a thousand times to wish undone again, which is a good reason why we should ponder the path of our feet." — *Mat. Henry.*

A humble man is like a good tree: the more full of fruit the branches are, the lower they bend.

c Dr. J. Hamilton.

a Yet show some pity.—I show it most of all when I show justice: for then I pity those I do not know, which a dismissed offence would after gall; and do him right that, answering one foul wrong, lives not to act another."—*Shakespeare.*

"Accuse not Heaven's delay; if loth to strike,—its judgments, like the thunder-gather'd storm, are but the greater." — *Webster.*

"'Tis with our judgments as our watches; none go just alike, yet each believes his own."—*Pope.*

b Mat. xxvii. 66.

Babylon by Captain Mignan. It exhibits a man standing upon two sphinxes and engaged with two fierce animals, possibly intended for lions. If it be not an astronomical representation, it might seem very probably an exhibition, partly symbolical, of some such event as the present. A Fellow of several learned societies, in adverting to this, directs attention to the great similarity which he finds between the features and dress of the man and those of the captive Jews in Egypt, in that representation which we have copied, from the sources to which he refers, under 2 Chron. xxxv. On comparing them, considerable resemblance may certainly be found about the head and its attire.[c]

18—20. (18) **instruments**, *etc.*, *Gesenius* trans. the word "concubines." "Nothing could divert the king's thoughts from the prisoner in the den."[a] (19) **very early**, *lit.* in the glimmer of morning. (20) **lamentable voice**, full of fear and sorrow.

Influence of faith.—The Orientals have an idea, that in whatever a man believes, whether in reference to the existence or non-existence of evil or danger in regard to himself, that so will his condition be regulated. In walking once with a learned Brahmin, through a grove of cocoa trees, I inquired, "Why are you not afraid of those nuts falling on your head, and killing you on the spot?" "Because I have only to believe they will not fall, and all is safe," was his reply.[b]

21—23. (21) **said Daniel**, the sound of his voice was the all-sufficing assurance. (22) **innocency**, purity, straightforwardness. **no hurt**, no wrong; nothing that could damage the king's authority. Daniel had only disobeyed to preserve a good conscience. (23) **glad**, quite a revulsion of feeling came over the king, and in sudden impulse he broke the decree so shamefully forced from him, and released Daniel. **believed . . God**, showing faith by the act of allegiance.

Daniel in the lion's den (*v.* 22).—I would take these words—I. Literally, as regards Daniel, and as it regards the king. 1. As regards the king, look at the positivity of his conduct, unhappiness; 2. As regards Daniel, captivity, beauty, learning, piety, devotion, persecution, age, society, name. II. I come now to take it spiritually, his portion, my God, the messenger, the lion's mouth shut, the law, the world. III. Taking the text mediatorially. 1. Daniel a type of Christ; 2. The lion, like the world, rough: like sin, sudden in attack.[a]

Daniel in the lion's den.—The third is a block of white marble found near the tomb of Daniel at Susa, and thus described by Sir R. K. Porter in his *Travels* (vol. ii. 416). "It does not exceed ten inches in width and depth, measures twenty in length, and is hollow within, as if to receive some deposit. Three of its sides are cut in bas-relief, two of them with similar representations of a man apparently naked, except a sash round his waist and a sort of cap on his head. His hands are bound behind him. The corner of the stone forms the neck of the figure, so that its head forms one of its ends. Two lions in sitting postures appear on either side at the top, each having a paw on the head of the man." These are certainly satisfactory illustrations of the custom in question, as existing at Babylon and Susa, and others might be adduced from Babylonian coins. As to the punishment itself opinions will be divided. But it is remarkable that Dr.

"Let honour be to us as strong an obligation as necessity is to others."—*Pliny.*

c Dr. Kitto.

a "For Darius it was a wretched night. He was sad and horror-stricken. He was a prey to remorse. Perhaps he was beginning to see how he had been the dupe of his lords, and furious indignation was rising like a storm in his soul."—*Robjohns.*
b Roberts.

vv. 21, 22. *Bp. Brownrig*, i. 47; *W. Keating*, 164.

v. 23. *Dr. G. D'Oyly*, i. 319; *C. Girdlestone*, ii. 395.

a Dr. Andrews.

"Compassion is that species of affection which is excited either by the actual distress of its object, or by some impending calamity, which appears inevitable. It is a benevolent sorrow for the sufferings or approaching misery of another. The etymology of the word expresses this idea with strict propriety, as it signifies suffering with the object."—*C. Buck.*

"Reputation oft got without merit, and lost without deserv-

ing." — *Shakespeare.*

b Dr. Kitto.

Paley thought that something similar would, as a capital punishment, be preferable to public executions, which he considered to have rather a hardening than a corrective effect upon the public mind.[b]

24. **accused Daniel,** prob. the leaders of the malicious party. Darius's effeminate nature manifested itself in ungovernable fury and passion. The barbarity of his action we cannot but condemn; but the death of these plotters is a remarkable instance of retribution. **children,** *etc.*,[a] comp. Est. ix. 13, 14.

a "It was in accordance with Oriental notions of justice, and was in keeping with Persian precedent, that all their kindred should perish with the guilty." —*Robjohns.*

Retribution.—The Rev. H. G. Keene states, in his *Persian Stories*, that the following narrative was related by a person of authority and reputation, who was one of the party. A vessel set sail from Bassorah to Bagdad, with several passengers on board. In the course of the voyage, the sailors, by way of a joke, put a man in irons as he lay asleep, and he became a subject of diversion to the whole party till they drew near to the capital. But when the sailors wanted to let him loose, the key was nowhere to be found, and after a long and fruitless search, they were compelled to send for a blacksmith to knock off the fetters. When, however, the blacksmith came, he refused to do what they wanted, till he had the authority of the magistrate; for he thought the man might be some criminal whom the officers of justice had laid hold of, and that his friends wished to favour his escape. To the magistrate they accordingly went, who sent down one of his attendants to see into it. But the officer, when he had heard their story, and had taken the evidence of some of the most respectable among the passengers, shook his head, and with a look of solemnity, said it was much too serious a case for him to decide. So they repaired in a body to the magistrate, and carried the poor captive with them. So strange a procession was sure to attract notice; and a crowd soon collected about them, each curious to know the prisoner's offence, and to catch a sight of him: till at length one man, springing forward, seized the captive by the throat, and exclaimed, "Here is the villain I have been looking for these two years: ever since he robbed and murdered my poor brother." Nor would he quit his hold till they came before the magistrate; and the murder being clearly proved, the man, who had been confined in joke only, was given up to death, as a punishment for the blood that he had shed.[b]

Ps. ix. 16; Pr. xxvi. 27.

"Conscience as a faculty includes a moral sense, or the power of discerning the distinction between right and wrong; which, combining with the understanding, or faculty of comparing and judging, judges of the right or wrong of our own moral dispositions and voluntary actions and of the dispositions and voluntary actions of other free agents."—*A. A. Hodge.*

b R. T. S.

25—28. (25) **wrote,** *etc.*, this may have been necessary bec. the previous edict had been widely circulated, and this new decree practically acted as a reversal, or withdrawal, of the former one. (26) **God of Daniel,** *i.e.* the God whose claim to universal recognition has been proved by His deliverance of Daniel.[a] (28) **prospered,** was restored to his rank and honour, and held his position securely. **the Persian,** who took the whole monarchy on Darius's death, and called it the Persian monarchy.

a Comp. Da. iii. 29, iv. 3, 34.

The decree of Darius (*vv.* 25—27).—We propose to consider—I. His views of Daniel's God. 1. His essential perfections; 2. His universal dominion; 3. His miracles of love and mercy towards His believing people. Such being his views of the Deity, we are no longer surprised at—II. His decree founded upon them. Let us distinctly notice—1. Its import; 2. The reasonableness of it. Behold then in this decree—(1) The effect which God's mercies

v. 27. *J. Saurin*, vii. 583.

v. 28. *J. Foster*, ii. 174.

"In Rome no temple was so low as that of honour built to show how humble honour ought to be, though there 'twas all authority."—*Butler.*

"Honour's a fine imaginary

should have upon us; (2) What use we should make of our influence.[b]

Assumption of honour.—

Let none presume
To wear an undeserved digni y.
O that estates, degrees, and offices
Were not derived corruptly! and that clear honour
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover, that stand bare!
How many be commanded, that command!
How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,
To be new varnish'd![c]

notion, that draws in raw and unexperienced men to real mischiefs, while they hunt a shadow."—*Addison.*

b C. Simeon, M.A.

c Shakespeare.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1—3. (1) **first year,** when the Bab. kingdom was apparently stable.[a] **the sum,** *i.e.* the summary, or general outline. **matters,** better, *words.* (2) **four winds,** emblems of commotions of nations. **great sea,** not a literal sea.[b] *Tregelles* thinks that the Medit. is referred to, as the centre of the region with which the vision is concerned. (3) **beasts,** symbols of nations. "The symbolisation of kings and kingdoms under the form of 'beasts' was a most ancient practice; and in Egypt and Assyria the practice was prevalent."[c]

Whirlwinds.—The whirlwind, it appears from the sacred writings, comes from different points of the compass. The Prophet Ezekiel speaks of one that came from the north; and although it appeared to him in vision, it was according to the course of nature: for we learn from other sources of information that it sometimes arises in that quarter. William of Tyre records an instance of a violent whirlwind from the north, in the time of the crusades, which enveloped two hostile armies in an immense cloud of dust, and compelled them for a while to suspend the work of destruction. When that enterprising traveller, Mr. Parke, was traversing the Sahara, or Great Desert, in his way to the Niger, destitute of provisions and water, his throat pained with thirst, and his strength nearly exhausted, he heard a wind sounding from the east, and instinctively opened his parched mouth to receive the precious drops of rain which he confidently expected, but it was instantly filled with sand drifted from the desert. So immense was the quantity raised into the air, and wafted upon the wings of the wind, and so great the velocity with which it flew, that he was compelled to turn his face to the west to prevent suffocation, and continue motionless till it passed. In Persia, violent currents of air are sometimes seen impelling the clouds in different directions, whose concussion produces an awful noise, like the rushing of a great body of water. As the cloud approaches the earth, the sound becomes still more alarming: for nothing, says Mr. Morier, can be more awful. To this natural phenomenon, the strife of the four winds in the vision of Daniel is perhaps allusive.[d]

a "The time is 17 years before the incidents narrated in ch. vi.

b "The earth itself is a sea, the sea is an emblem of the world, swelling with human pride and passion, and troubled with political agitations and popular revolutions."—*Wordsworth.*

c Ewald.

v. 3. J. C. Dieteric, 681.

"As the mother bird shrieks when the hawk is in the sky, that her young ones may hide themselves under her wings, so God, the Father of men, utters His voice of warning against sinners, that they may rush to His mercy's protection, before the devouring lion of Hell overtake them in destruction."—*John Bate.*

d Paxton.

4—6. (4) **like a lion,** *comp.* the colossal figures of winged lions, with human heads, and eagle's wings, in Assyrian sculp-

a "The king of Bab. was a lion

in strength and an eagle in swiftness; and in his variegated feathers, we may recognise an emblematical symbol of the plumage of many tributary nations in his armies, with which he flew to victory in all lands." — *Wordsworth.*

b "A leopard is a creature of extraordinary swiftness, and jumps upon its prey."— *Lowth.*

Pope Adrian IV., who in early life suffered great hardships from poverty, told a friend that all the hardships of his life were nothing in comparison to the Papal crown. The Emperor Diocletian found a crown so heavy that he laid it aside and retired to private life.

c Spencer.

tures. This beast stands for the Bab. monarchy.[a] **plucked,** reference may poss. be to Nebuc.'s illness. **man's heart,** or understanding. The animal character of the kingdom was changed, and the higher powers of intellect ruled. (5) **bear,** prob. standing for the Medo-Persian empire. **raised,** *etc.*, marg. "raised up one dominion," *i.e.*, the dual race became the one Persian kingdom. **three ribs,** poss. Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt. These were its prey, or booty. (6) **leopard,**[b] the Græco-Macedonian kingdom. **four wings,** denoting the swiftness of its victories.

Crime of despair.—Daniel's prophecy tells of four beasts.—the first a lion, the second a bear, the third a leopard; but the fourth, without distinction of either kind or sex or name, is said to be very fearful and terrible and strong, and had great iron teeth, destroyed, and brake in pieces, and stamped under his feet. Such a thing is despair: other sins are fearful and terrible enough, and have, as it were, the rage of lions and bears and leopards, to spoil and make desolate the soul of man; but despair hath horns too,—horns to push at God with blasphemy, at his brethren with injury, and at his own soul with distrust of mercy. Despair is a complicated sin, the complement of all sins. The greatest sins are said to be those which are opposed to the three theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity,—infidelity to faith, despair to hope, hatred to charity; amongst which, infidelity and hatred, the one not believing, the other hating God, are in themselves worse: but in regard of him that sinneth, despair exceedeth them both, in the danger that is annexed to it; for what can be more miserable, what more foul, than for a poor miserable wretch not to take pity of his own soul?[c]

7, 8. (7) **fourth beast,** the Roman empire, comp. ch. ii. 40. **two horns,**[a] or was divided into ten principalities, or sub-kingdoms. (8) **among them,** but after them. comp. *vv.* 24, 25. **eyes of man,** denoting great cunning and foresight.

The four great monarchies.— It has been satisfactorily proved by the best writers on the subject that the vision refers to the four great monarchies—the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Macedonian or Grecian, and the Roman; and that the second beast, which was like to a bear, symbolises the empire of the Medes and Persians. All the four monarchies are represented by beasts of prey, to intimate their agreement in the general character of fierceness and rapacity; and by beasts of different species, to intimate the existence of important differences in their character and mode of operation. The Babylonish empire is symbolised by a lion with eagle's wings, because it was the first and noblest kingdom upon earth; it was strong and fierce as a lion; it was swift and rapid in its movements, as a lion with eagle's wings: rising in a few years, under the conduct of Nebuchadnezzar, to the highest pinnacle of power and greatness. The third kingdom is represented by another beast, "like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given unto it." This is the Grecian monarchy; the distinguishing characters of which are great variety of disposition and manners, undaunted boldness, and rapidity of conquest, never before or since exemplified in the history of nations. The fourth beast was so great and horrible that no adequate name could be found for it; this nondescript was the symbol of the Roman empire, which

a "Rams are not unfrequently met having three, four, or even eight horns. To an Oriental mind there is nothing unnatural or improbable in the Prophet Daniel's beast."— *Van Lennep.*

Comp. the ten toes of Da. ii. 41.

b Paxton.

The world will never believe that Jesus is the Lord, till it sees its end; nor will it ever pray, till it is forced to utter the cry of despair, saying "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that

differed from all others in the form of its government, in strength, in power, in greatness, in length of duration, and in extent of dominion. The Persian monarchy, symbolised by the bear, has also certain specific differences, which are to be learned from the natural history of that animal. Cruel and rapacious as the others, the bear is inferior in strength and courage to the lion, and, although slower in its motions, more uniform in its appearance, and steady in its purpose, than the leopard. Such was the empire of the Medes and Persians: weaker and less warlike than the Babylonian, whose symbol is the lion; but less various in its principles of government, in the forms which it assumed, in the customs and manners of the nations which composed it, and less rapid in its conquests than the Macedonian, symbolised by the spotted leopard, one of the most rapid and impetuous animals that traverse the desert. But if the bear is inferior to the lion and leopard in strength, in courage, and in swiftness, it surpasses them in ferocious cruelty and insatiable voracity; it thirsts for blood and riots in carnage; and such was the empire of the Medes and Persians. They are stigmatised by ancient historians as the greatest robbers and spoilers that ever oppressed the nations. The symbol of this all-devouring people is accordingly represented as having "three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it," in the very act of devouring three weaker animals which it had seized: that is, of oppressing the kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which it conquered. And besides, to denote its rapaciousness and cruelty, it is added in the vision, "they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh."

9, 10. (9) **cast down**, better, *pitched*, or *placed*. The thrones were set for the heavenly assessors at the great judgment.[a] **Ancient of days**,[b] the Divine Being, who can only be apprehended by man under some *form*. Comp. John's vision, Re. i. (10) **fiery stream**, Ps. l. 3, xcvii. 3. **thousand**, *etc.*, De. xxxiii. 2; Ps. lxviii. 17; He. xii. 22; Re. v. 11. **books**, Re. xx. 12. "The books both of God's laws and men's actions."

Christ unveiled.—A Spanish artist was once employed to paint "The Last Supper." It was his object to throw all the sublimity of his art into the figure and countenance of the Lord Jesus; but he put on the table in the foreground some chased cups, the workmanship of which was exceedingly beautiful. When his friends came to see the picture on the easel, every one said, "What beautiful cups." "Ah!" said he, "I have made a mistake; these cups divert the eyes of the spectator from the Lord, to whom I wished to direct the attention of the observer." And he forthwith took up his brush and blotted them from the canvas, that the strength and vigour of the chief object might be prominently seen and observed. Thus all Christians should feel their great study to be Christ's exaltation; and whatever is calculated to hinder man from beholding Him in all the glory of His person and works should be removed out of the way! "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

11, 12. (11) **great words**, *v.* 8.[a] **given . . flame**, that prob. of the burning wheels, *v.* 9.[c] (12) **dominion**, their characteristic world-wide authority. **lives**, national lives, or existence.

sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

To leave the company of God's people for worldly society, is like going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Beware of thieves! The way is full of danger. If your lot is cast among the ungodly, act like the sailor who fears "breakers ahead."

"Vanity is the fruit of ignorance. It thrives most in subterranean places, never reached by the air of heaven and the light of the sun."—*Ross.*

a "Lit. 'They (the attendant ministers) set the seats.' The Prophet here describes the last great assize as a regular proceeding, like the preparations made for holding a judicial assembly or royal court."—*Wordsworth.*

b "This title appears to have a Bab. origin. It is one of the titles of the God *Anu*, who during the earliest period of the religion of the Euphrates, represented the idea of a cosmic (earthly) durance (heavenly) god, one who was at once heaven, earth, and time."—*Biblical Things.*

a Proud and blasphemous language.

Insolent assumption of braggarts.—

Here's a stay,
That shakes the rotten carcase of old Death
Out of his rags! Here's a large mouth, indeed,
That spits forth death and mountains, rocks and seas;
Talks as familiarly of roaring lions,
As maids of thirteen do of puppy-dogs!
What cannoneer begot this lusty blood?
He speaks plain cannon, fire, and smoke, and bounce;
He gives the bastinado with his tongue;
Our ears are cudgell'd.[c]

13, 14. (13) **like the Son of man,** *comp.* ch. iii. 25. One in the likeness of men, but in the majesty of God. **clouds,** *etc.*, Mat. xxvi. 64; Re. i. 7. (14) **given him,** *etc.*, ch. iii. 4, iv. 3, 34, vi. 27.[a]

The kingdom of Christ.—The hand of Providence has been visible in many important events, which have distinguished these latter ages; all concurring mutually to promote each other, and all seeming uniformly to tend to the same point. The revival of learning, arts, and sciences; their progress westward; their great increase among those who were able to diffuse them most widely, and to carry their influence to the most distant parts; the invention of printing; the reformation of religion in Europe; the discovery of the long-hidden continent of America; the opening of a new passage to the east; the improvement of navigation; the extension of commerce; the continual addition of new regions to the known parts of the world, and the communication rendered more safe and easy between the most remote; all these bearings and tendencies indicate a general effort, under a superior direction, towards a union and comprehension of the affairs of mankind in one great system: not a system of civil policy, not of universal temporal dominion; for no such shall ever arise: the only universal kingdom which shall henceforth be established upon earth is the spiritual kingdom of Christ. "To Him shall be given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. vii. 14).[b]

15—18. (15) **body,** lit. *sheath;* the spirit is thought of as being like a sword in its sheath. (16) **the truth,** or the explanation. (17) **kings,** or kingdoms: or perhaps dynasties.[a] (18) **the saints,** under Messiah.

The reign of the saints (*v.* 18).—I. The event predicted. 1. How they will take possession of the kingdom; 2. How they will administer it. II. The advantages that will accrue from it. 1. Those of a temporal nature; 2. Those of a spiritual nature. Address:—(1) Let none be ashamed of being accounted saints; (2) Let all endeavour to help forward the expected day.[b]

Swooning (*v.* 15).—Margin (Chald.) "sheath;" this is a very curious expression, when applied to such a subject, but it is perfectly natural. When a person has swooned, the people say, "His life has gone into its *uri*," *i.e.* sheath, meaning some particular place into which the life is supposed to retire and conceal itself from the sight. Has a man been wounded by a serpent,

b Comp. Rev. xviii. 8, xix. 20.

c Shakespeare.

"The owner ought to be more honourable than his estate."—*Zenophon.*

a Eph. i. 20, 23; He. i. 3, 4.

vv. 13. 14. *H. Marriott*, iv. 404; *R. J. Wilberforce*, 305.

v. 14. *Bp. Bagot, Warb. Lec.* 33; *T. Woodrooffe, Blooms. Lec.* x. 259.

"The glory of Christ shone as the lightning, brighter in the depths of night than in the glory of day."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

"Just as the Church cannot have two heads, so the one Head cannot have two bodies; for as that body were a monster which had two heads, so the head which had two separate bodies."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

b Bp. Lowth.

a "Each of the four kings represents a dynasty. Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Antiochus, and Antichrist."—*Fausset.*

vv. 15 16. *Dr. J. Owen*, xv. 476.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

Not Hercules himself could resist such odds.—*Latin.* Three helping each other are as good as six.—*Spanish.*

and should he appear to be dead, it is often said, "Fear not, his life has merely gone into its sheath." When a person's eyes are much sunken by sickness, the people say, "Alas! his eyes have gone into their sheath." "Well, my friend, when did you arrive?" "I came just as the sun was going into its sheath," *i.e.* going down. "I am happy to hear that the king hath put his anger and his sword into the sheath." [c]

19—22. (19) **fourth beast**, *v.* 7. (20) **look more stout**, or his appearance was more excellent than his fellows. He ultimately claimed superiority over them all. (21) **war . . saints**, *comp.* Re. xi. 7, 9, xiii. 7, xvii. 14.[a] (22) **came**, manifested himself for judgment. **saints . . kingdom**, 2 Ti. ii. 11.

The fourth empire.—The fourth empire is symbolised by "a dreadful and terrible beast," for which the Prophet found no name in the kingdom of nature. It resembled the fabulous monsters which poetic imagination sometimes delights to portray; for in the Book of Revelation John describes it as compounded of the three which preceded it: "The beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion." It possessed all the qualities which render beasts of prey a terror to man and other animals; the swiftness and cunning of the leopard, the ferocity of the bear, and the boldness and strength of the lion. The Roman empire, which it symbolised, resembled no state of society known among men; it displayed, in its character and proceedings, the vigour and courage of the Babylonians, the various policy and alacrity of the Greeks, and the unchanging firmness of the Medes and Persians: qualities which have been equally conspicuous in the papal state of that empire.[b]

23—25. (23) **diverse**, if this be referred to the papal Roman empire, the diversity may be seen in its partly ecclesiastical features. (24) **rise after them**, or behind them; in an unperceived and subtle way. The precise historical references depend upon the school of prophecy to which the commentator belongs. (25) **speak**, *etc.*, Re. xiii. 5, 6. **wear out**, by persecutions. **change times**, *etc.*, by interfering with existing and established governments. **time . . time**, *i.e.* three times and a half, or three years and a half of prophetical time. No explanation of the period can be more than conjectural.

Boasting, its vanity.—Now go and brag of thy present happiness, whosoever thou art; brag of thy temperature, of thy good parts; insult, triumph, and boast: thou seest in what a brittle state thou art, how soon thou mayst be dejected, how many several ways, by bad diet, bad air, a small loss, a little sorrow or discontent, an ague, etc., how many sudden accidents may procure thy ruin, what a small tenure of happiness thou hast in this life, how weak and silly a creature thou art. Humble thyself, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, know thyself, acknowledge thy present misery, and make right use of it. "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." Thou dost now flourish, and hast goods of body, mind, and fortune; but thou knowest not what storms and tempests the evening may bring with it. Be not secure, then; be sober and watch, if fortunate and rich; if sick and poor, moderate thyself.[a]

26—28. (26) **judgment**, *etc.*, *v.* 9. (27) **kingdom**, Lu.

c *Roberts.*

a Da. viii. 10, 24, xi. 32, 33, 35.

v. 19. *Dr. W. Worthington, Boyle Lec.* ii. 120. "The pleasures of the world are not like the waters of the Nile, which leave, when they are gone, the germs of beauty and fertility, to bud and blossom and cheer the heart of man; on the contrary, they are like those streams polluted by the washings of poisonous minerals, depositing the seeds of death and disease to all who drink them."—*Anon.*

b *Paxton.*

v. 23. *Dr. A. Clarke*, vi. 341.

v. 25. *T. Scott*, x. 297; *Dr. E. Pearson, Warb. Lec.* 395.

"What art thou? Have not I an arm as big as thine? A heart as big? Thy words, I grant, are bigger, for I wear not my dagger in my mouth."—*Shakespeare.*

a *Burton.*

"Waldus, a rich merchant in

Lyons, seeing one drop down dead in the streets, went home, and repented, changed his life, and became a preacher, and was the father and the founder of the people called Waldenses. 'Tis good to take warning by others' harms, and by the sight of their death, to look after our own life."—*Venning.*

a Lu. ii. 19, 50, 51.

b Dr. W. Clarke.

i. 27. **all dominions,** or rulers. **him,** Messiah as Head of the kingdom of the saints. (28) **countenance changed,** "was sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." **kept.. heart,** often pondering over it.[a]

The reign of the saints (*v.* 27).—I. That the doctrine of the text does not require us to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is at some future time to return in person to our world, and set up a visible and theocratic empire upon these continents. II. That the Scriptures do not require us to teach or to believe this doctrine even in any absolute, extreme, and unexceptionable sense. III. As to the way in which this great conquest is to be achieved. IV. That according to all Scriptural allusions it will be a very gradual conquest. V. That it is to be, and in a twofold sense, complete and universal. Learn:—1. The people of God must realise their universal mission; 2. Neglect in one department may enfeeble and endanger the whole.[b]

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—4. (1) **third year,** two years after the vision of the preceding chapter. The last year of Belshazzar's reign. **vision,** *etc.*, esp. referring to the rise of Antiochus, king of Syria.[a] (2) **was at Shushan,** or seemed in my trance to be at S. Susa, "the city of lilies," now Shuster.[b] **Elam,** western portion of Persia. **Ulai,** now the *Kerah.* or Karasu.[c] (3) **ram,** fig. for the Medo-Persian monarchy.[d] **two horns,** representing the Medes and the Persians. **higher.. last,** the Persian power came to overtop the Median. (4) **pushing,** fig. for extending its conquests.

Alexander the Great.—The one-horned goat was a symbol of Macedonia; and Alexander the Great, who was king of that country, is intended in this prophecy. He is said not to have "touched the ground," because the swiftness of his movements was unparalleled, and to have rushed on in the "fury of his power," because his army was irresistible, and his courage unequalled. The ram was a symbol of Persia and Media, countries which he overran and conquered; in proof of which it is most probable he adopted that kind of head-dress decorated with rams' horns, in which he is represented on certain very ancient medals, just as a person in this country, who had achieved any memorable action, used to make an addition, commemorative of the event, to his coat-of-arms. Dr. E. Clarke thinks these horns were worn by Alexander that he might be considered the son of Jupiter Ammon, an Egyptian deity with a ram's head, to whose oracle the dauntless Macedonian had paid a visit; but this opinion has been strongly opposed. He is called in the Koran, and by most Eastern writers, "Iscander Dhoulearnein," or the two-horned Alexander, the horn being a type of power, and its duplication signifying the extension of that power eastward and westward. The prophecy was written about two hundred years before its fulfilment.

a "This vision is writ in Heb., bec. that part of it wh. relates to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes did chiefly concern the Jews."—*Lowth.*

b "Susa was a royal residence of Persian kings in the days of Cyrus. The ruins of Susa, 300 miles E. of Babylon, are still visible, between the left branch of the Kerkhah, and the right branch of the Dizful, wh. flows into the Kuran river."—*Wordsworth.*

c Called in Kings, *Eulæus*, by the Greeks, *Choaspes.*

d "The ram was the royal ensign of Persia."—*Marcellinus.*

See *Bp. Newton*, i. 298.

5—7. (5) **he goat,** fig. of Alexander the Great.[a] **touched.. ground,** indicating the swiftness with which he marched.[b] Comp. ch. vii. 6. **notable horn,** *Heb.* "horn of sight," *v.* 21. (6) **ram.. power,** by one sudden thrust overturning the Medo-

a "The goat was the acknowledged symbol of Macedonia. Figures of a goat with a single

Persian kingdom. (7) **moved with choler,**[c] concentrated wrath. **smote,** *etc.*, *Arrian* tells that, at the river *Granicus*, Alex. plunged into the stream, swam across it, rushed on the Persians in the fury of his power, and overwhelmed them.

Goats in Macedon.—It is very well known that in former times Macedon and the adjacent countries, particularly Thrace, abounded with goats, insomuch that they were made symbols, and are to be found on many of the coins that were struck by different towns in those parts of Greece. But not only many of the individual towns in Macedon and Thrace employed this type, but the kingdom itself of Macedon, which is the oldest in Europe of which we have any regular and connected history, was represented also by a goat, with this particularity, that it had but one horn. The custom of representing the type and power of a country under the form of a horned animal, is not peculiar to Macedon. Persia was represented by a ram. Ammianus Marcellinus acquaints us that the king of Persia, when at the head of his army, wore a ram's head, made of gold and set with precious stones, instead of a diadem. The relation of these emblems to Macedon and Persia is strongly confirmed by the vision of Daniel recorded in this chapter, and which from these accounts receives no inconsiderable share of illustration. An ancient bronze figure of a goat with one horn, dug up in Asia Minor, was lately inspected by the Society of Antiquaries in London. The original use of it probably was to be affixed to the top of a military standard, in the same manner as the Roman eagle. This supposition is somewhat supported by what is related of Caranus, that he ordered goats to be carried before the standards of his army.[d]

horn are found on an cedonian monuments."—*Biblical Things.*

b Alexander overran the world in less than twelve years.

c Heb. *bitter;* Lat. *cholera;* Greek, *cholos*, bile.

"Alexander in his rages, and his wraths, and his furies, and his cholers, and his moods."—*Shakespeare.*

As soon may you draw all the rays of light out of the sun, or all the water out of the ocean, as to exhaust all the fulness of blessing there is in Christ.

d ***Burder.***

8—10. (8) **broken,** Alex. died at the early age of thirty-two, B.C. 323. **four notable ones,** the four divisions into which the Macedonian kingdom was divided.[a] (9) **little horn,** Antiochus Epiphanes.[b] **pleasant land,** Palestine.[c] (10) **to,** better, *against.* **host of heaven,** prob. referring to the Jewish priests and high officials: the imagery is taken from the Bab. conception of the gods and their satellites forming the heavenly host. **cast,** *etc.*, prophesying this king's shameful treatment of the Jewish priests, etc.

The kingdom of God.—What is God doing in this world? By day and by night, in light and in darkness, by good and by evil, by His friends and by His enemies, God is building up a kingdom among men. He is laying the foundations of it as broad as the earth, and He will carry up the superstructure as high as the heavens. God is the architect. God is superintending the work, and all men are His workmen. There are many men who are glad to help God build this world-kingdom of righteousness, and who do it on purpose: but there are millions and millions of men who think, while they are hewing, and sawing, and shaping wood, and quarrying and chiselling stone, and working, that they are building a house for themselves, and that they are carrying out their own plans: while God, that sits far above all men, sees that they are working for Him, and that the materials with which many of them meant to build their own house are going into the foundations of the house that He is building.[d]

a "Lysimachus had Thrace and Bithynia; Cassander had Macedonia and Greece; Seleucus Syria, Babylonia, and the East; and Ptolemy Egypt, Palestine, and Arabia Petræa."—*Wordsworth.*

b "'There came out of them (*i.e.* the successors of Alexander) a wicked root, Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been a hostage at Rome.'"—*Bk. of Maccabees*, i. 10.

c Ps. xlviii 2; Eze. xx. 6.

d ***Beecher.***

11, 12. (11) prince, *etc.*, or against God Himself.[a] Some think the reference may be to Onias, the high priest. daily sacrifice, *see* Nu. xxviii. 3. place . . down, by Antiochus both the altar and the temple were profaned. (12) an host, prob. should be, *a set time.*[b] The meaning is that God permitted Antiochus thus to act without His check, bec. of the transgression of the Jews.[c] it, the horn. truth, or the Law; the true religion.

Invisible growth of the kingdom of God.—You tell your child that this pine tree out here in the sandy field is one day going to be as large as that great sonorous pine that sings to every wind in the wood. The child, incredulous, determines to watch and see whether the field pine really does grow and become as large as you say it will. So, the next morning, he goes out and takes a look at it, and comes back and says, "It has not grown a particle." At night he goes out and looks at it again, and comes back and says, "It has not grown a bit." The next week he goes out and looks at it again, and comes back and says, "It has not grown any yet. Father said it would be as large as the pine tree in the wood, but I do not see any likelihood of its becoming so." How long did it take that pine tree in the wood to grow? Two hundred years. The men who lived when it began to grow have been buried, and generations besides have come and gone since then. And do you suppose that God's kingdom is going to grow so that you can look at it and see that it has grown during any particular day? You cannot see it grow. All around you are things that are growing, but that you cannot see grow. And if it is so with trees and things that spring out of the ground, how much more is it so with the kingdom of God! That kingdom is advancing surely, though it advances slowly, and though it is invisible to us.[d]

13, 14. (13) saint, holy one, or angel; ch. iv. 13. how long, for what length of time should such awful profanation last? of desolation, of making desolate.[a] Mat. xxiv. 15. (14) unto . . days, these prophetical times are very difficult, and all expanations are conjectural. Poss. 6 yrs., 4 months, and 40 days.[b] cleansed, or justified from the transgression wh. brought the calamity.

Kingdom of Christ—its glories.—The palace of Versailles with its countless representations of battles, sieges, stormings, surprises, and all other forms of wholesale and retail murder, is dedicated, according to an inscription on its front, "To all the glories of France." Bah! As well consecrate a shambles to all the glories of a butcher. But what a glorious spiritual palace is the Church, and how truly is it dedicated to all the glories of the Lord Jesus! Within its walls hang the memorials of battles far more worthy of the historian's quill than those of Austerlitz or Wagram; victories are there commemorated which put to the blush all the achievements of Charlemagnes or Napoleon; for the contests are with evil principles, and the conquests are triumphs over iniquity and rebellion; there are no garments rolled in blood; fire and vapour of smoke are not there, but the efficacy of atonement, the energy of grace, the omnipotence of the Holy Ghost, the puissance of eternal love, all these are there, and happy are the eyes that see them. May the life of each one of us contribute a new work of celestial art to those which

a In the Bk. of Maccabees this Antiochus is described as the man "who thought that he could reach to the stars of heaven."

b "The word *tsaba*, host, likewise signifies a set time."-*Lowth.*

c The Bk. of Maccabees traces all the calamities suffered under Antiochus to the transgression of certain Jews who introduced heathen customs into Jerusalem just before.

If on earth one gate is shut, you may try another. Not so with regard to Christ; there is but one gate, and that is a "strait" one.

d *Beecher.*

a "There is prob. a special reference to the *idol* which Antiochus caused to be set up on God's altar, and there to be worshipped."—*Lowth.*

b "Though God hath revealed to His Church the hope of better days, so that no doubt should be entertained of the fact, yet hath He seen fit to keep in His own power the actual times or seasons when those better days shall begin to end no more."-*Spk. Com.*

vv. 13, 14. *F. Nolan, Warb. Lec.* 107.

already represent to angels and heavenly intelligences "the glories of Christ."[c]

15—18. (15) **sought . . meaning**, by earnest studying and thought. **a man**, one like a man. (16) **Gabriel**, ch. ix. 21. This was the name of the man who stood before him. (17) **afraid**, struck with fear and astonishment.[a] **son of man**, intended to remind Daniel that he was *only* man, though to him were thus given great prophetic visions. **at the time**, better. "to the time of the end belong the visions." (18) **deep sleep**, or trance.[b]

The political character of the good time coming (*v.* 18).—The text indicates the character of the golden age. I. It will have a good government. 1. It will be an educated kingdom; 2. Virtuous; 3. Free; 4. Peaceable. II. It will have a permanent government. This we infer—1. From the length of time in gaining it; 2. The firm hold which the morally true takes upon human nature; 3. The mediatorial life of Jesus Christ.[c]

Man's idea of future.—

To me there is no future. I abhor
The self-delusions men affect. With them
The future is a god-king born in heaven,
Rich with hereditary royalties,
And entail of interminable times.
Morn's roseate breath, fresh blown o'er night's bright dew,
Is foul before this urchin's as a sough;
His hand is like the lily's fragrant snow;
And he is robed in weeds of whitest sheen,
Pet-godling of the world! The present,—what?
A ragged, beggard, dottard, sick to death
Of the grey years and round returning skies.
Nor past nor future is; the present, all.[d]

19—21. (19) **last end**, or "I will explain to thee the whole series of God's judgments upon His people to the end and conclusion of them." (20) **ram**, *v.* 3. (21) **rough**, or hairy. **first king**, not first in order, but first in importance. Philip was the first king of Macedon.[a] *Grecia*, in this *v.*, is literally *Javan*,[b] Ge. x. 2.

Futurity in view.—Oh, happy oblivion of earthly things, which puts heaven and eternity in our view! Nothing which this visible world can set before us is worthy our regard, especially when at the end of the landscape the invisible glories of heaven solicit and court our love. Nothing which our carnal eyes can present to us is fit to stay or engage a soul that is capable of enjoying God; none of these fading, perishing objects deserve a room in that heart whose capacity is infinite, and which was made for eternity. Let us, then, shut our eyes to this transient scene—this vain show of the world—and open them only to that which is truly worthy of our view—the solid and lasting glories that attend the faithful walkers with God above, the felicities of heaven! Let these be always in our view; and by these fixed stars let us steer our course in this our passage through the troublesome waves of this world, and not by those wandering meteors which rise from the earth. These are false lights, and such as will end in darkness. Let us not therefore sail by them, but take the stars of heaven for our guides,—those safe and tried

c Spurgeon.

a Rev. i. 17.

b Eze. i 28, ii. 1, 2; Lu. ix. 22; Re. i. 17.

As the sun is as ready to pour its radiance upon the daisy on a village common as upon the oaks in Windsor Park, so is Christ as willing to visit the home of the poorest and feeblest as that of the richest and noblest of earth.

c Dr. Thomas.

vv. 15—18. *F. Nolan, Warb. Lec.* 135; *J. Flavel*, ▼. 385.

d Bailey.

a "Alexander was the first who as generalissimo of Greece, subdued the Persian empire."—*Fausset.*

b "Cuneiform discovery has made it evident that Ionia was well known to the Assyrians under the name of *Yavanu*, or Yaonai, long before the Bab. captivity."—*Spk. Com.*

If you are in Christ, and Christ is in you, then the world should see nothing else.

directors, that will not fail to conduct us to our haven; thus walking by faith, and not by sight; taking our measures from the other world, and not from this; till we come to enjoy what we now believe, and our faith be turned into vision.[c]

22—24. (22) four kingdoms, *see* on *v.* 8. not . . power, not so mighty as he. (23) transgressors, *etc.*, see on *vv.* 12, 13. fierce countenance, indicating an untractable temper. dark sentences,[a] practised in craft and policy. Description suitable to Antiochus. (24) not . . power, that wh. belonged properly to him, or his kingdom; but by craftily gaining over others to his side.[b] holy people, *Heb.* people of the holy ones.[c]

Tyrants surrounded by danger.—

Tyrants are never safe, nor should be;
The ground is mined beneath them as they tread;
Haunted by plots, cabals, conspiracies,
Their lives are long convulsions, and they shake,
Surrounded by their guards and garrisons.[d]

25—27. (25) by peace, *i.e.* by pretending peace and friendship. Prince of princes, Jehovah Himself. broken without hand,[a] *i.e.* without any human invention, by an immediate judgment of God.[b] (26) shut . . vision, *comp.* ch. xii. 4. "Conceal the sense of it from common understandings." It was not *then* to be generally understood. many days, or remote times. (27) sick, with grief at the calamities thus revealed as coming on his nation. did . . business, intimating that he was in some public office during Belshazzar's reign.[c]

The future peace.—The day is coming, I think, when the Quaker idea shall have a new interpretation, a larger sphere: when men shall love their enemies, bless those that curse them, do good to those that hate them, and pray for those that despitefully use them and persecute them; when they shall receive injury and not resent it; when they shall requite wrong with love. To one who sees the revengeful, vindictive feelings of men; the volcanic heavings which are so common in the most harmonious families; how business is carried on regardless of rectitude; how governments in their course will hardly stop for justice; how in all departments of life the law of might is made the law of right—to such a one it seems almost absurd to hear a minister say that a day is coming when, the world over, the law of love shall be the reigning law. But that day is coming, or else prophecies are false, and Christ came in vain. That which we need, and that which we are yet to have, is the exemplification of this highest force—suffering love. That is the highest form of justice, and the highest form of administration. There is not, either this side of the throne of God or beyond it, anything else yet revealed or known so supreme and effective as suffering love suffering for others, rather than the making them suffer.[d]

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—6. (1) Darius, ch. v. 31, vi. 28. Ahasuerus, the Jewish name given to Astyages. made king, or appointed ruler of Babylon by Cyrus the conqueror. (2) by books, those written by such Prophets as Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc. word . . prophet,

c Norris.

a Artifices.—*Gesenius.*

b Re. xiii. 5—8.

c Re. xiv. 12.

v. 23. *Dr. J. H. Todd, Don. Lec.* 82; *Dr. T. Zouch*, i. 65.

d Shee.

a 2 Mac. ix. 9.

b "God struck him with a horrible disease, attended with torments both of body and mind."—*Lowth.*

c "Though Daniel was neglected by Belshazzar, yet (such was his faithfulness and loyalty) he did not neglect the king's business." — *Wordsworth.*

"As long as we live in this world we must have something to do in it; and even those whom God has most dignified with His favours must not think themselves above their business." — *Mat. Henry.*

d Beecher.

a "The soul and body are so nearly related, that the humiliation of both is

Je. xxv. 12, xxix. 10. **seventy years**, these are to be dated from the end of the third or beginning of the fourth year of Jehoiakim. (3) **set my face**, *fig.* for earnestness of purpose. Perhaps also alluding to the custom of praying with the face looking towards Jerusalem. **fasting**, *etc.*,[a] signs of penitence. (4) **dreadful**, worthy of dread, or holy fear.[b] (5) **we have sinned**, Daniel pleads as standing for and representing the Jewish people. (6) **hearkened**, so as to heed and obey.

Religious fasting (*v.* 3).—I. The duty of religious fasting. 1. The light of nature seems to recognise this duty; 2. We have decisive examples in the Bible; 3. The precepts of the Bible show that it is a Divine institution. II. The benefits that may be expected to result from the proper performance of this duty. 1. An expression of penitence; 2. To keep the body under; 3. Clears the mind; 4. Ministers to bodily health; 5. Aids charity. III. Consider the method of observing a religious fast which will render it profitable. Learn:—1. In vain without the heart is in it; 2. It should be thorough; 3. Retirement is needful; 4. Set times should be observed; 5. There should be no ostentation; 6. Should be associated with benevolence to the poor.[c]

a "Some Jews were not cast off so far from Jerusalem as others, but all alike were sharers in the guilt."—*Fausset.*

b Ne. ix. 16, 17; Ps. cxxx. 4, 7.

v. 7. *Dr. C. Hussey*, 45.

v. 8. *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii 284.

v. 9. *T. Hobbes*, 127; *Dr. A. Littleton*, 63; *Dr. M. Hole*, i. 37.

c *Beddome.*

7—10. (7) **righteousness**, this is the solemn acknowledgment that the national calamities had been deserved and needed. **confusion**, such as those feel who are convicted of sin. **far off**, some being found in the most distant countries.[a] **trespass**, the word means, "covert dealing, deception, and faithlessness." (8) **fathers**, elders, who are responsible for showing good example. (9) **mercies**, *etc.*, lit. loosings and untyings of the bands of sin.[b] (10) **walk**, the usual Bible fig. for ordering life and conduct.

The confession of true penitence (*v.* 8).—I. Shame may be considered in a threefold light. 1. As sinful, when criminal; 2. As penal; 3. As penitential. II. On what accounts the Prophet might say unto us, etc. 1. Persons are often ashamed of the meanness of their origin: 2. Of personal deformity; 3. Poverty; 4. Want of understanding; 5. Frustrated hopes; 6. All sin is a ground of shame. III. Conclusion. 1. Let us seek after the disposition here expressed; 2. Let us join these two together, "unto us," etc.—unto thee, etc.[c]

11—15. (11) **curse**, *etc.*, that threatened in the law.[a] **oath**, or imprecation. (12) **confirmed**, lit. *made to stand:* comp. Is. xliv. 26. **judges**, Heb. *Shofetim.* Here used generally of the princes and rulers. (13) **thy truth**, or revealed word, in wh. God conveyed the knowledge of His will. (14) **watched upon**,[b] observing carefully, and waiting the opportunity for corrective judgments. (15) **gotten . . renown**, or made Thee a name.

The day of judgment.—

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?
When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead!

a I.e. xxvi. 14; De. xxviii. 15, xxix. 18.

b Is. xxxi. 28, xliv. 27.

vv. 13, 14. *Hon. A. P. Percival*, 113.

If you are a Christian, you are dead to those things to which you were once alive; and you are alive to those things to which you were once dead.

Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be Christ the trembling sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away![c]

16—19. (16) **righteousness**, wh. ensures the fulfilment of Divine promises, as well as of Divine threatenings. **thy city**, chosen as Thine in the election of grace which changes not. (17) **prayer . . servant**, who pleads as an intercessor. **Lord's sake**, Heb. *Adonai*. (18) **our righteousness**, on the ground of personal merit.[a] (19) **defer not**, tarry not.[b] "Observe the fervour of the prayer in the triple repetition of the holy name Adonai."

The answer to Daniel's prayer (*vv.* 17—23).—Let us consider—I. The record here given. In this there are two things to be noticed. 1. The prayer of Daniel; 2. The answer given to him. II. The instruction to be gathered from it. 1. The nature of prayer; 2. Its efficacy when duly offered. Exhort to universal prayer.[c]

Greatness of mercy.—

Had not the milder hand of mercy broke
The furious violence of that fatal stroke
Offended justice struck, we had been quite
Lost in the shadows of eternal night.
Thy mercy, Lord, is like the morning sun,
Whose beams undo what sable night had done;
Or, like a stream, the current of whose course,
Restrained awhile, runs with a swifter force.
Oh! let me glow beneath those sacred beams,
After bathe me in those silver streams;
To Thee alone my sorrows shall appeal;
Hath earth a wound too hard for heaven to heal?[d]

20—23. (20) **whiles**, *etc.*, at the very time. Even before the prayer was actually complete. (21) **Gabriel**, ch. viii. 16. **fly swiftly**, as one breathless and wearied out with quick running.[a] **evening oblation**, three o'clock in the afternoon. (22) **skill**, *etc.*, or ability to understand. (23) **greatly beloved**, Heb. *a man of desires*. "The object of God's delight."[b]

Prayer and praise.—We must not make God stay for our praises till He hath finished a mercy, but praise Him at the beginning of a mercy: we should be as ready to return our praises for a mercy, as God is to hear our prayers when begging a mercy. Now, God comes forth early to meet a praying soul, "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth" (Dan. ix. 23); "I said I would confess my transgression, and Thou forgavest" (Psal. xxxii.). Thus should we echo in our thankfulness to the first intimation that God gives in His providence of an approaching mercy. If you do but hear when the king is on his road toward your town, you raise your bells to ring him in, and stay not till he be entered the gates. The birds they rise betimes in the morning, and are saluting the rising sun with their sweet notes in the air. Thus should we strike up our harps in praising God at the appearance of a mercy.[c] Prayer has divided seas, rolled up flowing rivers, made flinty rocks gush into fountains, quenched flames of fire, muzzled lions, disarmed vipers and poisons, marshalled the stars against the wicked,

c Walter Scott.

a "In the word trans. *present* the Heb. *cause to fall* better preserves the idea. There is an allusion intended to the practice of kneeling or falling prostrate in prayer." — *Spk. Com.*

b "Defer not the accomplishment of the promise Thou hast made to restore us to our own country, and the free exercise of our religion. So remarkable a turn of providence will very much redound to the honour of Thy name."—*Louth.*

c C. Simeon, M.A.

d Quarles.

a Gesenius.

b "Daniel is the St. John of the Old Testament; and St. John is the Daniel of the New." — *Wordsworth.*

"'Twas thus upon his fasting day, the 'Man of Loves' was fain to pray, his lattice open toward his darling west, mourning the ruin'd home he still must love the best." — *Keble, vv.* 20—27. *Dr. R. Gordon*, 371.

c Gurnall.

Some Christians are afraid to show their Christianity. They resemble a bright candle in a dark

stopped the course of the moon, arrested the sun in its rapid race, burst open iron gates, recalled souls from eternity, conquered the strongest devils, commanded legions of angels down from heaven. Prayer has bridled and chained the raging passions of man; and routed and destroyed vast armies of proud, daring, blustering atheists. Prayer has brought one man from the bottom of the sea, and carried another in a chariot of fire to heaven. What has not prayer done?[d]

lantern; they are afraid lest others see the light.

d Dr. Ryland.

24—27. (24) **holy city**, still so called, though in ruins and desolate.[a] **finish**, or complete the judgment on transgression. **make . . sin**, or seal up the sins. **everlasting**, or abiding; perhaps with the full meaning of *spiritual*, and so referring to Messianic times. **most Holy**, *i.e.* Messiah; or perhaps the "holy of holies" is intended; and its consecration indicated the restoration of the Temple-service. (25) **troublous times**, Ne. ix. 36, 37. (26) **cut off**, by a violent death. **for himself**, *comp.* Is. liii. **prince**, the Roman general, Titus. **flood**, *etc.*, prophecy of the Rom. destruct. of Jerus. (27) **he**, *i.e.* Messiah; reference is to our Lord's ministry. **cause . . cease**, alluding to the passing away of the Mosaic system.[b]

An everlasting righteousness (*v.* 24).—I. What are we to understand by the word righteousness? Moral honesty, inward holiness, imputed,—this is blessed, glorious, invaluable, everlasting. II. On what account is it called everlasting? 1. Intended to extend to mankind even from eternity; 2. Efficacy took place directly after the fall: 3. It will continue till time shall be no more; 4. Will endure to everlasting life. III. What are we to understand by bringing it in? 1. Our Lord's promulgation of it in the world; 2. His working it out in His life and death; 3. Its communication, through the Holy Spirit, to the heart.[c]

Weeks (*v.* 25).—The word translated in our version "weeks" means simply a septenary number, or hebdomad. It stands in the same relation to seven as our English word dozen does to twelve, or as decade to ten. Thus, we may say a dozen of days, or a dozen of weeks, or a dozen of years; so we may say a hebdomad of days, *i.e.* seven days; or a hebdomad of years, *i.e.* seven years.[d] Grotius says, "Seventy hebdomads, that is, of years; for so the Talmudists were accustomed to speak, as they still do; consequently when a hebdomad of days is meant, the word 'days' is wont to be added."

a "The common Oriental name of Jerusalem at the present day, given to no other city even by Muslims, is *Elkhoods*—the Holy. The Heb. shekel bore the inscription, 'Jerusalem Kadusha, or Jerusalem the Holy.'"—*Van Lennep.*

b "Prophecies are of the nature of the Author, with whom a thousand years are as one day; and therefore are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have a springing and germinant accomplishment through many years, though the height and fulness of them may refer to one age."—*Lord Bacon.*

c G. Whitefield.

d Tregelles.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1—3. (1) **third . . Cyrus**, B.C. 534. Daniel must at this time have been ninety years old. **Belshazzar**, ch. i. 7. **was long**, or referred to great calamities. (2) **mourning**, with the grief induced by the visions.[a] (3) **pleasant bread**, Heb. *bread of desire.* Intimating that he had no appetite. **anoint**, *etc.*, this was usually neglected in sickness.[b]

Future.—

See on the mountain's southern side,
Where the prospect opens wide,
Where the evening gilds the tide,
How close and small the hedges lie!

a "The reason of Daniel's fasting and mourning seems to be, because the adversaries of the Jews began to obstruct the building of the temple. Ezr. iv. 4, 5."—*Lowth.*

b Mat. vi. 17.

See Bp. Newton, i. 335.

vv. 2, 3. *R. J. Wilberforce*, 113.

Nothing has ever shown the real state of the world like the cross of Christ.

What streaks of meadows cross the eye!
A step, methinks, may cross the stream,
So little distant dangers seem;
So we mistake the future's face,
Eyed through hope's delusive glass;
As you summits soft and fair,
Clad in colours of the air,
Which to those who journey near,
Barren, brown, and rough appear;
Still we tread the same coarse way,
The present's still a cloudy day.[c]

c *Dyer.*

4—6. (4) **Hiddekel**, Ge. ii. 14. (5) **clothed in linen**, the usual dress of priests, as the symbol of sanctity. **girded**, *etc.*, Re. i. 13. **Uphaz**, a place unknown, Je. x. 9. (6) **beryl**, Eze. i. 16. With this *v.* comp. Re. i. 13—15.[a]

a Eze. i. 26—28, ii. 1, 2; Re. xix. 11—16.

Voice of God.—

There is a voice, a mighty voice, that everywhere doth come,
Or in the hum of multitudes or the solitude of home;
A voice that whispereth to the soul of a viewless presence nigh
As the murmurings of the leaflets tell that a breeze is passing by

It cometh in the breath of morn, and in the noon-tide glow,
Where the torrent stream in its rock-bed swells, where the babbling brooklets flow;
Upborne upon the parting sigh of the evening from the hill
It whispereth, and in the black-browed night, when the tongue of man is still.

Amid the war of the tempest rage that thrilling voice we hear,
Summoning many a silent sigh, and many a thought of fear;
And in the thunder-peal it comes, like a warning from the sky,
Telling to trembling man of death and desolation nigh.

In the turbulent tumult of the waves, woke by the whirlwind's sweep,
When the giant might of the winter storm doth revel on the deep;
And in the breath of the soft south wind it comes—that varying voice—
Now bearing doubt and terror, now making all things rejoice.

In visible characters is it writ upon the heaven-vault high,
In the daystar, and the morn, and all the travellers of the sky,
In the sunbeam and the lightning flash that fadeless form I see,
That in the noon-day or the night cometh unceasingly.

Oh! know ye not what is that voice that wandereth everywhere,
That tongue whose soothing melody or fearful wrath you hear?
Oh! know ye whence it cometh, where it maketh its abode?
Its dwelling-place is in all space, it is—the Voice of God![b]

"His voice attention still as midnight draws; his voice more gentle than the summer's breeze, that mildly whispers through the waving trees, soft as the nightingale's complaining song, or murm'ring currents as they roll along." — *Dryden.*

You go to Christ for justification, that the condemning power of sin may be taken away; but do you go to Christ for sanctification, that the reigning power of sin may be taken away?

b *Edward W. Coxe.*

7—9. (7) **quaking**, the sign of fear of some unknown thing or presence.[a] (8) **no strength in me**, *comp.* Re. i. 17.[b] (9) **deep sleep**, or trance. He saw nothing with his bodily eyes, but much with his awakened spiritual vision.

a Comp. Ac. ix. 7.

b Comp. Job xlii. 5, 6; Is. vi. 5.

Human lonelihood (*v.* 7).—Though men are gregarious, they have an individuality. A man feels himself to be alone—I. In his profoundest thoughts. II. In his moral convictions. III. In his greatest sorrows. IV. In his dying moments.[c]

c *Dr. Thomas.*

"We love Him because He first loved us." No

Man in his loneliness.—
Thou must go forth alone, my soul, thou must go forth alone,
To other scenes, to other worlds, that mortal hath not known.
Thou must go forth alone, my soul, to tread the narrow vale;
But He whose word is sure hath said His comforts shall not fail,
His rod and staff shall comfort thee across the dreary road,
Till thou shalt join the blessed ones in heaven's serene abode.

10, 11. **hand,** *etc.*, comp. Re. i. 17. (11) **greatly beloved,** ch. ix. 23. "The angel calls him Daniel, not Belteshazzar: he gives him the name by which he was known to the saints of God."[a]

Character of Daniel (*v.* 11).—I. His early piety. II. The caution, zeal, and resolution which he displayed in keeping himself unspotted from the world. III. The holy indifference and contempt with which he looked down on worldly honour, wealth, and applause. IV. His exemplary piety and devotion. V. His strong faith and confidence in God. VI. His profound humility and disposition to give God the glory. VII. His religion was habitual, uniform, consistent, and lasting. Learn:—1. Religion entertained in its power and purity dignifies and ennobles our nature; 2. Imitate the conduct of Daniel.[b]

12—14. (12) **from . . day,** showing that if there had seemed to be any delay in the answer to prayer, there had not been one moment's inattention or neglect. (13) **prince,** *etc.*, poss. here meaning the guardian angel of Persia; figurative of the hindrance to the Div. purposes offered by national and political movements. **Michael,** meaning, "Who is as God;" see Jude 9; Re. xii. 7. **remained,** to resist political movements that might be prejudicial to the interests of the Jews.[a] (14) **many days,** covers a long stretch of time.

The future.—The future—the last evangel, which has included all others. Its cathedral the dome of immensity,—hast thou seen it? Coped with the star-galaxies; paved with the green mosaic of land and ocean; and for altar, verily, the star-throne of the Eternal! Its litany and psalmody the noble arts, the heroic work and suffering, and true heart-utterance of all the valiant of the sons of men. Its choir-music, the ancient winds and oceans, and deep-toned, inarticulate, but most speaking voices of destiny and history, supernal ever as of old, between two great Silences:

"Stars silent rest o'er us,
Graves under us silent."[b]

15—17. (15) **face . . ground,** in humble reverence. **dumb,** as one overawed. (16) **touched my lips,** so restoring the power of speech.[a] **my sorrows,** *comp.* for the word 1 Sa. iv. 19. "It expresses the overpowering grief which masters mind as well as body."[b] "Writhings as of a woman in travail."[c] (17) **how . . lord?** meaning, "How can I who am so feeble talk with one who is so majestic?"[d]

Angels.—I have been reading some of Milton's amazing descriptions of spirits, of their manner of life, their powers, their boundless liberty, and the scenes which they inhabit or traverse; and my wonted enthusiasm kindled high. I almost wish for death, and wondered with great admiration what that life, and what those strange regions really are, into which death will turn the spirit free! I cannot wonder, and I can easily pardon, that

one of the Apostles loved Christ more than he who is called the "beloved" disciple.

a Spk. Com.

Eze. xiv. 20.

*v.*11. *Bp.Kerr*,145; *Dr. E. Payson*, ii. 428; *J. Williams*, 301.

b Dr. Payson.

a "I gained my point against the adverse angel of Persia, so as to influence the Persian authorities to favour Israel's restoration."—*Fausset.*

v. 12. *Adn. Daubeny*, ii. 51; *R. P. Buddicom*, 94.

v. 13. *A. Fuller*, 516.

v. 14. *Dr G. Richards, Bamp. Lec.* 319.

b Carlyle.

a Comp. Re. i. 17, 18.

b Spk. Com.

c Fausset.

d "How can thy servant, a poor mortal man, maintain a discourse with a person of your rank and dignity?"-*Lowth.*

this intense and sublime curiosity has sometimes demolished the corporeal prison, by flinging it from a precipice, or into the sea. Milton's description of Uriel and the Sun revived the idea which I have before indulged as an imagination of sublime luxury, of committing myself to the liquid element (supposing some part of the sun a liquid fire), of rising on its swells, flashing amidst its surges, darting upwards a thousand leagues on the spiry point of a flame, and then falling again fearless into the fervent ocean. O! what is it to be dead; what is it to shoot into the expansion, and kindle into the ardours of eternity; and what is it to associate with resplendent angels![e]

Angels our servants are,
And keep in all our ways;
And in their watchful hands they bear
The sacred sons of grace:
Unto that heavenly bliss
They all our steps attend;
And God Himself our Father is,
And Jesus is our friend.[f]

18—21. (18) again, *see vv.* 10, 16. (19) peace, *etc.*, this is the assurance that no evil would result from the vision of angels, wh. seems always to have awakened fear in men.[a] (20) knowest, *etc.*, *v.* 14. fight . . Persia, intimating that new difficulties in the way of the restoration of the Jews had arisen, and would have to be overcome. prince of Grecia, another subsequent world-power, whose evil influence would have to be resisted.[b] (21) scripture of truth,[c] *i.e.* in the true writings, contrasted with the sacred books of Babylonia and Persia. in these things, better, "against these princes."

"*Be strong, yea, be strong.*"—It was to the man "greatly beloved"—beloved, as there is no doubt, by God as well as by men—that such a command came, which is here doubled with an affirmative to render it more forcible. Yet Daniel was not, as we see from various incidents in his life-history, by any means feeble or weakly in temperament. There are not many of us, perhaps, naturally as vigorous and brave as he was; and very few of us, it is certain, can approach to the daily walk with God which was so marked a characteristic of the life of Daniel. To us, therefore, these words are weighty; for to every Christian worker nothing is more important than strength; the possession of this is a proof that those other blessings have been secured which enrich the inner life, and render the outer life of the individual as a fertilising fountain. Weakness and wickedness have been said to be near akin, but this is stating the case too strongly; there is a weakness inherent in some, and which is not entirely conquerable however willing the spirit may be. If not a sin, however, weakness is an impediment, and a source of discomfort. "To be weak is to be miserable," cries one of Milton's fallen angels, to which a great modern writer adds as corollary, that "to be weak is not so miserable as to be weaker than one's work." True of all, this is especially true of the Christian teacher; and how can he succeed if he lacks strength, while the opposing forces, seen and unseen, are ceaseless in their energies? But strength is attainable, or we should not have the injunction thus worded, since nothing is required from us which it is not in our power to attain unto.

e J. Foster.

"The union of Christians to Christ, their common Head, and, by means of the influence which they derive from Him, one to another, may be illustrated by the loadstone; it not only attracts the particles of iron to itself by the magnetic virtue, but, by this virtue, it unites them one among another."—*Cecil.*

f C. Wesley.

a Ju. xiii. 21, 22.

b "The hostility towards God's people which 'the prince of Persia and the prince of Grecia' showed, is illustrated historically in the opposition and hindrances endured by the Jews at Jerusalem, not only during the reigns of Darius Hystaspes, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes, but also, if in a less degree, in that of Alexander and his successors."—*Spk. Com.*

c "In the secret book of God's decrees, which are truth."—*Fausset.*

"But the union in high and noble sentiments is so strong and close, that the differences only appear as the background to a fine picture, giving greater prominence of expression to the leading characteristic of the scene."—*John Bate.*

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1—4. (1) **first year**, when it would be uncertain what position Darius would take with regard to the people of Israel. **him**, prob. Michael is intended.[a] (2) **yet**, *i.e.* after Darius. **three kings**, Cambyses (son of Cyrus), B.C. 529; Pseudo-Smerdis, B.C. 522; Darius Hystaspes, B.C. 521.[b] **fourth**, Xerxes, whose riches were proverbial. **against Grecia**,[c] wh. Xerxes invaded, B.C. 480. He was defeated at Salamis, and from that time Persia is viewed as *politically* dead. (3) **mighty king**, Alexander the Great. (4) **broken**, *comp.* ch. viii. 8, 23. **posterity**, Alex.'s sons did not live to succeed him.[d]

The fourth king—Xerxes.—Soon after the death of Alexander the Great, his kingdom was divided towards the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity: four of his captains, Ptolemy, Antigonus, Lysimachus, and Cassander reigned over Egypt, Syria, Thrace, and Greece. The kingdoms of Egypt and of Syria became afterwards the most powerful; they subsisted as independent monarchies for a longer period than the other two; and as they were more immediately connected with the land of Judæa, which was often reduced to their dominion, they form the subject of the succeeding predictions. Bishop Newton gives even a more copious illustration of the historical facts, which verify the whole of this prophecy, than that which had previously been given by his illustrious predecessor of the same name, who has rendered that name immortal. He quotes or refers to authorities in every instance, and his dissertation on that part of the prophecy which relates to the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt is wound up in these emphatic words: "It may be proper to stop here, and reflect a little how particular and circumstantial this prophecy is concerning the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria, from the death of Alexander to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. There is not so complete and regular a series of their kings—there is not so concise and comprehensive an account of their affairs to be found in any author of these times. The prophecy is really more perfect than any history. No one historian hath related so many circumstances, and in such exact order of time, as the Prophet hath foretold them; so that it was necessary to have recourse to several authors, Greek and Roman, Jewish and Christian, and to collect here something from one, and to collect there something from another, for better explaining and illustrating the great variety of particulars contained in this prophecy." So close is the coincidence between the prophetic and the real history of the kings of Egypt and of Syria, that Porphyry, one of the earliest opponents of Christianity, laboured to prove its extreme accuracy, and alleged from thence that the events must have preceded the prediction. The same argument is equally necessary at the present hour to disprove the subsequent parts of the same prophecy, though none can urge it now. The last of those facts to which it refers, the accomplishment of which is already past, are unfolded with equal precision and truth as the first, and the fulfilment of the whole is yet incomplete. The more clearly that the event corresponds to the prediction, instead of being an evidence against the truth, the more conclusive is the

a Da. x. 21.

b S. Jerome.

c "*Herodotus* tells us that Xerxes brought together an army of four millions. Others say eight millions. These wars, carried on by Xerxes' successors, ended at last in the conquest of the Persian monarchy by Alexander the Great." —*Lowth.*

d "Alex.'s son, Alexander Ægus, by Roxana, was slain, when 14 years of age, by Cassander; his other son, Hercules, by Barsine, was soon after murdered by Polysperchon, instigated by Cassander."—*Wordsworth.*

While nature dwells in unity and peace, it goes on prosperously in the accomplishment of the things to which she is appointed A locomotive, working in unity and peace, answers satisfactorily the end of construction. So the Church, when she is possessed of the one blessed spirit of Divine unity and peace, she increases with all the increase of God.

demonstration that it is the word of Him who hath the times and the seasons in His own power.[e]

5—9. (5) **south**, or Egypt.[a] **strong above him**, this may refer to Seleucus the first, or Nicator, king of Syria, who was originally a general of Ptolemy Lagus. (6) **join . . together**, fulfilled in the union of Ptolemy Philadelphus and Antiochus Theus, the grandson of Seleucus Nicator. **daughter**, *etc.*, Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy, married Antiochus Theus. **retain the power**, Antiochus subsequently divorced her. **he stand**, *i.e.* Antiochus; he was poisoned by a former wife, whom he restored, after divorcing Berenice. **begat her**, better as marg. "whom she brought forth." (7) **out of**, *etc.*, ref. is to Ptolemy Euergetes.[b] (8) **gods**, *etc.*, for the spoil he brought back, the Egyptians called him Euergetes, or Benefactor. (9) **come into**, gain secure possession of.

Disappointment.—It is a trite saying that disappointment is the hardest of all things to bear. Hardest, because it finds the soul unbraced to meet it—relaxed, at ease, and turned to indulgence and joy. A man can make up his mind to anything, and take it calmly. He can live under the hardest conditions, and bear them cheerily. There is nothing so elastic and self-accommodating in the universe as man. The conditions under which human beings have lived and flourished are most startling to us in these easy days. Man delights to proclaim himself king of circumstance, and can maintain his royalty, though in want and exile. Tell him what he must do and bear, and he will do and bear it, and much more beside. . . . But disappointment embitters and maddens. It may be the smallest fraction of good, a little morsel of delight which a wealthier or happier would spurn; no matter if it be but the killing of the prisoner's spider, or Mungo Park's bit of moss discovered; whatever we are not braced to meet, saddens or gladdens us far beyond, vastly larger, than more momentous things which we have wrought up into the average of life. Who has not muttered "Marah" over some well in the desert which he strained himself to reach and found to be bitterness? Have you found no salt waters where you thought to find sweetness and joy? Love, beauty, the world's bright throngs, marriage, home, the things which once wooed you and promised to slake the thirst of your soul for happiness, are they all Elims, sweet springs and palms? Oh, what fierce murmurings of "Marah" have I heard from hearts wrung with anguish, from souls withered and blasted by a too fond confidence in anything or any being but God! Believe it, no man, with a man's heart in him, gets far on his wilderness way without some bitter soul-searching disappointment; happy he who is brave enough to push on another stage of the journey, and rest in Elim, "where there are twelve springs, living springs of water, and threescore and ten palms."[c]

10—13. (10) **his sons**, those of Seleucus. **one shall come**, Antiochus the Great. **overflow**, representing the passing of a mighty army as a devastating flood. (11) **king of the south**, a weak and profligate prince. Ptolemy Philopater. **his hand**, that of Ptolemy.[a] **lifted up**, so that he tried to force his way into the holiest part of the Jewish temple. He did not follow up his victory, but made a hasty peace, that he might

e Keith.

a Egypt was conquered by Alexander in B.C. 332, and placed under the lieutenancy of Ptolemy, who assumed the title of king about B.C. 304.
"It is not the design of the Scripture to give us an historical narrative of the actions of heathen princes any farther than the affairs of the Jewish nation were concerned in them."—*S. Jerome.*
b "He avenged the death of Berenice by overrunning Syria, even to the Euphrates."—*Fausset.*
"The best enjoyment is half disappointment to that we mean, or would have in this world."—*P. J. Bailey.*
"How fruitful are the seeming barren places of Scripture: bad ploughmen, which make balks of such ground. Wheresoever the surface of God's Word doth not laugh and sing with corn, there the heart thereof within is merry, with mines affording, where not plain matter, hidden mysteries."—*Thomas Fuller.*
c Baldwin Brown.

a "The author of the Third Book of Maccabees ascribes this victory to the passionate importunity of Arsinoë, Ptolemy's sister, who ran about

return to his licentious pleasures.[b] (13) after .. years, during wh. Antiochus was otherwise engaged.

Prince of angels.—There appears to be one who presides over the rest of the good angels, to whom the name of Michael is often given. Josh. v. 14:—"As captain of the host of Jehovah am I come." Dan. xi. 11:—"Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me." Dan. xii. 1:—"Michael shall stand up, the great prince." Rev. xii. 7, 8:—"Michael and his angels fought against the dragon." It is generally thought that Michael is Christ. But Christ vanquished the devil, and trampled him under foot singly; Michael, the leader of the angels, is introduced in the capacity of a hostile commander waging war with the prince of the devils, the armies on both sides being drawn out in battle array, and separating after a doubtful conflict (Rev. xii. 7). St. Jude also says of the same angel, "when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, he durst not bring against him a railing accusation," which would be an improper expression to use with reference to Christ, especially if He be God. Thess. iv. 16:—"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel." Besides, it seems strange that an apostle of Christ, in revealing things till then so new and unheard of concerning his Master, should express himself thus obscurely, and should even shadow the person of Christ under a difference of name.[c]

14—16. (14) robbers .. people, or law-breakers.[a] "Sons of violent ones of thy people." Factious and seditious adventurers among the Jews. the vision, or prophecy of the future of the Jews. (15) king .. north, Antiochus. fenced cities, such as Zidon, Gaza, Abila, Samaria, Gadara, etc. chosen people, or choicest troops. (16) glorious land, *i.e.* Judæa.[b] consumed, lit. *perfected*, *i.e.* perfectly brought under his sway.[c]

Exactions of law.—

"I lent my gossop my meir to fetch hame coals
And he her droun'd into the querrel holes,
And I ran to the consistory for to plenyé,
And there I happened amang ane greedy menyé.
They gave me first ane thing they call *citandum;*
Which aucht days I gat but *libellandum;*
Within ane month I gat *ad opponendum;*
In ane half year I gat *inter loquendum;*
An syne I gat—how call ye it?—*ad replicandum;*
But I could never ane word yet understand him.
And then they gart me cast out mony placks,
And gart me pay for four and twenty acts;
But or they came half gate to *concludendum,*
The fient a plack was left for to defend him.
Thus they postpon'd me twa year, with their train,
Syne, *hodie ad octo*, bade me come again.
And then thie rooks they roupit wonder fast,
For sentence silver they cryit at the last.
Of *pronunciandum;* they made me wonder fain;
But I gat ne'er my gude grey meir agan."[d]

17—19. (17) set his face, the sign of a formed purpose. upright ones, better, "he shall make agreements with him."[a] daughter of women, Cleopatra is so called on account of her

the army with her hair about her shoulders, and by promises and entreaties engaged the soldiers to fight with more than ordinary resolution."—*Lowth.*

b "The government of Alexandria was as bad and disgraceful as that of the Countess Du Barry under Louis XIV."—*Niebuhr.*

"It is the first distemper of learning when men study words, and not matter."—*Bacon.*

c Milton.

a "The phrase is usually taken to describe those who set law and right at defiance when these come in conflict with their own supposed interests."—*Spk. Com.*

b Ez. xx. 6, 15; Da. viii. 9.

c "*Josephus* shows that the meaning is not that the Jews should be utterly consumed; for Antiochus favoured them for taking his part against Ptolemy, but that their land should be subjected to him.

"Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets break through."—*Swift.*

d Sir D. Lyndsay.

a Prob. referring to his proposals for a contract of

marriage between his own daughter Cleopatra and king Ptolemy.

b All countries lying upon the sea coasts are called islands in the Heb. dialect.

c "When attempting to rob the temple at Elymais, to raise money to pay the Romans, as agreed, he was slain by the inhabitants."—*Lowth.*

d *A. Maclaren.*

great beauty. **corrupting her,** or with the intent to corrupt her, by making her use her influence against her husband's interests. **neither . . him,** Cleopatra took her husband's, not her father's side. (18) **isles,** or the maritime cities of Lesser Asia.[b] **a prince,** Lucius Scipio, the Rom. consul. (19) **fort,** Antioch, the chief fortress of his kingdom."[c]

Pressing onward.—"There is a touching story, I remember, told of a modern sculptor, who was found standing in front of his masterpiece, sunk in sad reverie; and when they asked him why he was so sad, 'Because,' he answered, 'I am satisfied with it.' 'I have embodied,' he would say, 'all that I can think or feel. There it is. And because there is no discord between what I dream and what I can do, I feel that the limit of my growth is reached.' Unless we saw an ideal far above us, the actual would never approximate toward it. . . The very characteristic of the idea of growth in grace is the indefinite approximation to an infinite perfection. The type for us is the express image of God, the complete man, Jesus Christ. To that supreme beauty our nature is capable of unlimited approach."[d]

20—22. (20) **raiser of taxes,** Seleucus Philopater is so called bec. he seized the treasures of the temple at Jerusalem. **glory . . kingdom,** *i.e.* in the temple at Jerusalem. **few days,** his reign was comparatively short, reaching only to twelve years. **neither . . battle,** he was poisoned by Heliodorus, his treasurer, who designed to usurp the kingdom.[a] (21) **vile person,** Antiochus Epiphanes.[b] **peaceably,** by peaceable, guileful artifices. He gained the kingdom by craft and flattery. (22) **flood,** fig. for an overflowing army. **prince,** *etc.*, head of the Jewish nation at the time. Poss. Onias, the high priest.[c]

Worship of honour.—

"Honour's a mistress all mankind pursue;
Yet most mistake the false one for the true:
Lured by the trappings, dazzled by the paint,
We worship oft the idol for the saint.
Courted by all, by few the fair is won;
Those lose who seek her, and those gain who shun:
Naked she flies to merit in distress,
And leaves to courts the garnish of her dress.
The millioned merchant seeks her in his gold;
In schools the pedant, and in camps the bold;
The courtier views her, with admiring eyes,
Flutter in ribands, or in titles rise;
Sir Epicene enjoys her in his plume;
Mead, in the learned wainscot of a room:
By various ways all woo the modest maid
Yet lose the substance, grasping at the shade."[d]

a So *Appian* relates.

b "The younger son of Antiochus the Great. He was a hostage at Rome, from whence he escaped. He was brother and successor of Seleucus, and a usurper, for he supplanted his nephew Demetrius, the son of Seleucus and lawful heir to the throne."—*Wordsworth.*

c "This Onias was banished by him, and afterward murdered by one of his lieutenants. See 2 Mac. iv. 10, 34."—*Lowth.*

d *Whitehead.*

23—26. (23) **league . . him,** *i.e.* with Ptolemy Philometor. Some say, with Jason the high priest after Onias. **small people,** his forces were but small in this first expedition. (24) **fattest,** *etc.*, the rich tracts of Cœle-Syria and Palestine. **scatter,** *etc.*, by this unusual generosity he sought to win favour, and secure his throne. **forecast,** *etc.*, or think his thoughts: plan for the future by keeping his hold on the chief places of strength, esp. Pelusium, the key of Egypt. (25) **south,** Egypt. **not stand,**

"'Tis wrong to sleep in church; 'tis wrong to borrow what you can never pay; 'tis wrong to touch with unkind word the heart that pines in sorrow; 'tis

history records that at this battle Ptolemy was afraid and fled. (26) feed, *etc.*, his own courtiers. overflow, better, be overflown, swept away as with flood.

Result of wrong.—It is recorded of Marius, that after his overthrow by Sylla, he was always in consternation, as if he heard the sound of the trumpets, and the noise of the victorious army pursuing him. His fears were no longer quiet than whilst charmed with wine or sleep: he therefore was continually drunk, that he might forget himself, his enemy, and his danger. Thus men make a pitiful shift to forget their latter end, and, whilst they are following their secular affairs or sensual pleasures, are unconcerned for what is to be hereafter.[a]

27—29. (27) one table, they met at Memphis. Antiochus pretended to take care of the interests of his nephew Philometor, and he seemed to confide in his uncle's protection. Both were trying to deceive. (28) then, when he had taken the spoils of Egypt. heart, or purpose. against . . covenant, or covenant people, who, he understood, showed signs of revolting.[a] exploits, esp. the massacre of the Jewish people, and despoiling the temple. (29) return, for a third expedition.

The duration of the vision.—The subject of the prophecy is represented in these words :—"I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days; for the vision is for many days." And that which is noted in the Scripture of truth terminates not with the reign of Antiochus. At that very time the Romans extended their conquests towards the East. Macedonia, the seat of the empire of Alexander the Great, became a province of the Roman empire. And the prophecy, faithfully tracing the transition of power, ceases to prolong the history of the kings of Egypt and of Syria, and becomes immediately descriptive of the progress of the Roman arms. The very term (shall stand up) which previously marked the commencement of the Persian and of the Macedonian power is here repeated, and denotes the commencement of a third era, or a new power. The word in the original is the same in each. And "arms (an epithet sufficiently characteristic of the extensive military power of the Romans) shall stand up, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." All these things, deeply affecting the Jewish state, the Romans did, and they finally rendered the country of Judæa "desolate of its old inhabitants."[b]

30—32. (30) Chittim, Ge. x. 4; Rev. xxiv. 24. Ships of Macedonia.[a] forsake, *etc.*, *i.e.* renegade Jews, who joined Antiochus. The king used these deserters to work out his schemes. (31) arms, prob. meaning princes and mighty ones. pollute, *etc.*, profaning the temple, and stopping the sacrifices. abomination, idol, wh. was set on God's altar. Prob. an image of Jupiter, to whom the temple was dedicated. (32) corrupt, or corrupted. Ref. is to such apostates as Jason and Menelaus. know their God, and keep faithful to Him. do exploits, as illus. in the career of the Maccabees.

Religious achievements (*v.* 32).—Exploits are rare, difficult, and remarkable, and illustrious actions for these God's people are prepared by their knowledge of Him, and the strength they derive

wrong to scold too loud; to eat too much; 'tis wrong to put off acting till to-morrow."—*J. T. Watson.*

a Dr. Bates.

a "The bent of Antiochus was towards Hellenism; and the surest way to his favour was in religious matters to decry the laws and ceremonies of Moses, and in civil matters to encourage the gymnasium and other foreign introductions. The patriotic Jews were compelled to witness the scandal, and gnash their teeth over what they had no power to prevent." — *Spk. Com.*

"What studies please, what most delight, and fill men's thoughts, they dream them o'er at night."—*Creech.*

b Keith.

a "The Roman Senate sent an envoy who met Antiochus near Alexandria, and demanded that he should retire fr. Egypt, which was an ally of Rome. Antiochus said he would consider the mandate, whereupon the envoy drew a circle round him with his staff on the

sand of the shore, and commanded him not to go forth of it till he had given an answer to the message. Antiochus was confounded, and after a little hesitation, obeyed, and evacuated Egypt."—*Wordsworth.*
b W. Jay.

a "Some were found, after their death, with idols consecrated under their clothes."—*Lowth.*

b 1 Pe. i. 7.

c Dr. K. Bonar.

"The earth, with its scarred face, is the symbol of the past — the air and heaven of futurity." —*Coleridge.*

"The present is a point to which but little thought appertains, while the mind hovers backwards and forwards between the past and the future, expending the store of its regret upon the one, and wasting all its wishes upon the other."—*James.*

"The world was made for man and man for God. The upper link gave way, and all that depended on it fell. Man rebelled and carried away from its allegiance a subject world."—*Arnot.*

"Here I have no abiding city; as a tenant at will,

from Him. Illustrations—Noah, Moses, Elisha, Elijah, Joshua, they have done exploits: as—1. Sufferers; 2. Scholars; 3. As merchants; 4. As travellers; 5. Warriors; 6. As donors and benefactors. These exploits are not confined to any particular rank or station.[b]

33—35. (33) **understand,** *comp.* ch. xii. 10. **instruct,** so as to keep them from being corrupted by the flatterers. **fall,** *etc.*, in time of persecution, and of patriotic warfare. (34) **little help,** that wh. would seem little and insufficient, but God would make effective. **cleave . . flatteries,** *i.e.* not sincerely.[a] (35) **them of understanding,** *i.e.* some of the patriot party. **try them,** test and prove them,[b] and call out more energy and effort.

Every Christian a teacher (*v.* 33).—Taking these words as applicable to every Christian man and woman, let us see what they teach us. 1. A Christian is one among the people; 2. He is one that has understanding; 3. He is one who does not keep his knowledge to himself; 4. A Christian is an instructor; 5. He is an instructor of many.[c]

Note on Daniel's prophecies.—The propagation of Christianity—the succeeding important event—is thus represented: "The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many." The persecutions which they suffered are as significantly described: "Yet they shall fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil many days. Now, when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help, and many shall cleave to them with flatteries." And such was Constantine's conversion and the effect which it produced. No other Government but that of the Romans stood up, but the mode of that government was changed. After the days of Constantine, Christianity became gradually more and more corrupted. Previous to that period there had existed no system of dominion analogous to that which afterward prevailed. The greatest oppressors had never extended their pretensions beyond human power, nor usurped a spiritual tyranny. But, in contradiction to every other, the next succeeding form of government, unparalleled in its nature in the annals of despotism or of delusion, is thus characterised by the Prophet: "And the king (the ruling power signifying any government, state, or potentate) shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished." This description is suited to the history of the Eastern and Western Churches, to the government under the Grecian emperors at Constantinople, or of the popes at Rome. The extent of the Roman empire might justify its application to the latter; but the connection of the prophecy, as referable to local events, tends to limit it to the former. In either case it is descriptive of that mode of government which prospered so long in the East and in the West, and which consisted in the impious usurpation of spiritual authority; in the blasphemous assumption of those attributes which are exclusively Divine, and in exalting itself above the laws of God and man. But instead, perhaps, of being confined exclusively to either, it may have been intended to represent, as it does characterise, the spiritual tyranny and the substitution of the command-

ments of men for the will of God, which oppressed Christendom for ages, and hid from men the Word of God. The prevalence of superstition, the prohibition or discouragement of marriage, and the worship of saints, as characteristic of the same period and of the same power, are thus prophetically described: "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, or matrimony, neither shall he regard any god. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces, Mahuzzim;" protectors or guardians, a term so applicable to the worship of saints, and to the confidence which was reposed in them, that expressions exactly synonymous are often used by many ancient writers in honour of them, of which Mede and Sir Isaac Newton have adduced a multiplicity of instances. Mahuzzim were the tutelary saints of the Greek and Romish Churches. The subserviency, which long existed, of spiritual power to temporal aggrandisement, is also noted in the prophecy: "And he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain." And that the principal teachers and propagators of the worship of Mahuzzim, "the bishops, priests, and monks, and religious orders, have been honoured, and reverenced, and esteemed in former ages; that their authority and jurisdiction have extended over the purses and consciences of men; that they have been enriched with noble buildings and large endowments, and have had the choicest of the lands appropriated for Church lands, are points of such notoriety that they require no proof, and will admit of no denial." [d]

36—39. (36) above every god, every *El*. God of gods, *El-Elim*.[a] indignation, "till God's anger should be turned away from Israel." [b] (37) god, better, gods. Antiochus desired to Hellenise everything. desire of women, poss. referring to the Syrian Venus, who was esp. worshipped by women.[c] (38) god of forces, or fortresses. "Prob. a general and purposely indefinite title." Indicating that he would only honour war, brute force. pleasant things, or jewels. (39) strange god, new even to his own people. cause them, *i.e.* those who join him in worshipping this god of his own.

The king of the South.—Having thus described the anti-christian power, which prospered so long and prevailed so widely, the prophecy next delineates, in less obscure terms, the manner in which that power was to be humbled and overthrown, and introduces a more particular definition of the rise, extent, and fall of that kingdom which was to oppress and supplant it in the latter days. "And at the time of the end shall the king of the South push at him." The Saracens extended their conquests over great part of Asia and of Europe: they penetrated the dominions of the Grecian empire, and partially subdued, though they could not entirely subvert it, nor obtain possession of Constantinople, the capital city. The prediction, however brief, significantly represents their warfare, which was desultory, and their conquest, which was incomplete. And Arabia is situated to the south of Palestine. The Turks, the next and last invaders of the Grecian empire, were of Scythian extraction, and came from the north. And while a single expression identifies the Saracen invasion, the irruption of the Turks, being of a more fatal character and more permanent in its effects, is fully described. Every part of the description is most faithful to the

I may be dismissed at a minute's warning; but I have an immortal soul,—a soul that must be happy or miserable to eternity,—a soul that must join angels in glory, or fiends in darkness! How weighty then is the concern of salvation; and how important every moment that shortens the span allotted me below!"—*Haweis.*

"Learning maketh young men temperate, is the comfort of old age, standing for wealth with poverty, and serving as an ornament to riches."—*Cicero.*

d Keith.

a 2 Th. ii. 4.

b Is. x. 23, 25.

c Maurer.

v. 36. *Dr. J. H. Todd, Don. Lec.* 135.

"Every day, every hour in the day, is a talent of time; and God expects the improvement of it and will charge the non-improvement of it upon you at last. Cæsar, observing some ladies at Rome to spend much of their time in making much of little dogs and monkeys, asked them whether the women in that country had no children to make much of.

"An Italian philosopher expressed in his motto, 'that time was his

treasure ;' an estate, indeed, which will produce nothing without cultivation, but which will always abundantly repay the labours of industry, and satisfy the most extensive desires, if no part of it be suffered to lie waste by negligence, to be overrun with noxious plants, or laid out for show rather than use."—*Dr. Johnson.*

"Time was figured by the artists of Greece as an old man, running on tiptoes, with wings at his feet, a razor, or a scythe, in his right hand, a lock of hair on his forehead, and his head bald behind; of all which particulars the signification is too well known to need a comment."—*W. Jones.*

d Keith.

facts. Their local situation, the impetuosity of their attack, the organisation of their armies, and the success of their arms, form the first part of the prediction respecting them. "And the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots and with horsemen, and with many ships ; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over." Although the Grecian empire withstood the predatory warfare of the Saracens, it gave way before the overwhelming forces of the Turks, whose progress was tracked with destruction, and whose coming was indeed like a whirlwind. Chariots and horsemen were to be the distinguishing marks of their armies, though armies in general contain the greatest proportion of foot-soldiers. And in describing their first invasion of the Grecian territory, Gibbon relates that "the myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six hundred miles, from Tauris to Arzeroum, and the blood of one hundred and thirty thousand Christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet. The Turkish armies at first consisted so exclusively of horsemen, that the stoutest of the youths of the captive Christians were afterwards taken and trained as a band of infantry, and called janizaries (yengi cheri), or new soldiers." In apparent contradiction to the nature of their army, they were also to possess many ships. And Gibbon again relates, that "a fleet of two hundred ships was constructed by the hands of the captive Greeks." But no direct evidence is necessary to prove that many ships must have been requisite for the capture of so many islands, and the destruction of the Venetian naval power, which was once the most celebrated in Europe. "The words, 'shall enter into the countries, and overflow and pass over,' give us an exact idea of their overflowing the western parts of Asia, and then passing over into Egypt."[d]

40—42. (40) **push at him**, this may refer to Antiochus's third expedition ; we have no record of a fourth ; but the historical explanation of this *v.* cannot be assured. (41) **glorious land**, *i.e.* Palestine. **chief**, lit. *firstlings.*[a] (42) **stretch**, *etc.*, fig. for putting forth power.

The glorious land.—"He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown." This expression, "the glorious land," occurs in the previous part of the prophecy (v. 16), and in both cases it evidently means the land of Israel ; and such the Syriac translation renders it. The Holy Land formed part of the first conquest of the Turks. And "many countries shall be overthrown." The limits of the Turkish empire embraced the ancient kingdoms of Babylon, Macedon, Thrace, Epirus, Greece, etc., and the many countries over which they ruled. The whole of Syria was also included, with partial exceptions. These very exceptions are specified in the prophecy, though these territories partially intersect the Turkish dominions and divide one portion of them from another, forming a singular contrast to the general continuity of kingdoms. And while every particular prediction respecting these separate states has been fully verified, their escaping out of the hands of the Turks has been no less marvellously fulfilled. "But these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." Mede, Sir Isaac and Bishop Newton, in applying this prophecy to the Turkish empire, could only express in general terms that the Arabs possessed these countries, and

a "Any invader on his way to Egypt through Palestine would leave untouched the tribes to the E. of the Jordan, esp. if rapid progress were his object."—*Spk. Com.*

"When Drexelius was asked by his friend Faustinus how he could do so much as he had done, he answered, 'The year has three hundred and sixty-five days, or eight thousand four hundred and sixty hours : in so many hours great things may be done ; the slow tortoise

exacted tribute from the Turks for permitting their caravans to pass through them. But recent travellers, among whom Volney has to be numbered, have unconsciously given the most satisfactory information, demonstrative of the truth of all the minutiæ of the prediction. Volney describes these countries in part—Burckhardt traversed them all—and they have since been visited by other travellers. Edom and Moab are in possession of the Bedouin (or wandering) Arabs. The Turks have often attempted in vain to subjugate them. The partial escape of Ammon from their dominion is not less discriminating than just. For although that territory lies in the immediate vicinity of the pachalic of Damascus, to which part of it is subjected,—though it be extremely fertile by nature,—though its situation and its soil have thus presented, for several centuries, the strongest temptation to Turkish rapacity,—though they have often attempted to subdue it,—yet no fact could have been more explicitly detailed, or more incidentally communicated, than that the inhabitants of the greater part of that country, particularly what adjoins the ancient but now desolate city of Ammon, "live in a state of complete independence of the Turks." "He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries." How significantly do these words represent the vast extent of the Turkish empire, which alone has stretched its dominion over many countries of Asia, of Europe, and of Africa! Ill-fated Egypt was not to escape from subjection to such a master. "And the land of Egypt shall not escape; but he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt." The Turks have drained Egypt of its wealth, of its gold and of its silver and of its precious things: and such power have they exercised over them, that the kingdom of the Pharaohs, the land where everlasting pyramids were built, despoiled to the utmost, is now one of the poorest, as it has long been the basest, of kingdoms. "The Libyans and Ethiopians shall be at his steps." These form the extremities of the Turkish empire, and were partially subject to its power. "After the conquest of Egypt, the terror of Selim's victories," says the historian, "spreading wide, the kings of Africa, bordering upon Cyrenaica, sent their ambassadors with offers to become his tributaries. Other more remote nations also towards Ethiopia were easily induced to join in amity with the Turks." Exclusive of Egypt, they still retain the nominal power over other countries of Africa. Such is the prophetic description of the rise and extent of that power which was to possess Judæa in the latter days; and it is a precise delineation of the rise and extent of the Turkish empire, to which Judæa has been subject for centuries.[b]

43–45. (43) **Libyans**, *etc.*, allies of Egypt. **at his steps**, *i.e.* among his followers. (44) **tidings**, *etc.*, concerning Artaxias, king of Armenia, who revolted in the N., and Arsaces, leader of the Parthians in the E. (45) **plant**, *etc.*, sign of entire conquest.[a] **between the seas**, the Mediterranean and the Dead Seas. **come to his end**,[b] on his return from the expedition indicated in *v.* 44.

Gold: its power.—Gold is the only power which receives universal homage. It is worshipped in all lands without a single temple, and by all classes without a single hypocrite; and often has it been able to boast of having armies for its priesthood, and

made a long journey by losing no time."—*Bishop Horne.*

"The greatest loss of time is delay and expectation, which depends upon the future. We let go the present, which we have in our power, and look forward to that which depends upon chance—and so quit a certainty for an uncertainty."—*Seneca.*

One of the hours each day wasted on trifles or indolence, saved and daily devoted to improvement, is enough to make an ignorant man wise in ten years—to provide the luxury of intelligence to a mind torpid from lack of thought—to brighten up and strengthen faculties perishing with rust—to make life a fruitful field, and death a harvest of glorious deeds.

How empty learning, and how vain is art, but as it mends the life and guides the heart.

b Keith.

a His palace-like military tents.

b "The most brilliant of the Syro-Macedonian kings died in the mountain-town of Tabal, consumed in body by a loathsome ulcer, afflicted in mind by horrible apparitions and re-

morse of conscience." — *Mulman.*

2 Th. ii. 8.

v. 45. *B. Harrison, Warb. Lec.* 124.

"Midas longed for gold, and insulted the Olympians. He got gold, so that whatever he touched became gold, and he, with his long ears, was little the better for it. Midas had insulted Apollo and the gods; the gods gave him his wish, and a pair of long ears, which also were a good appendage to it. What a truth in these old fables!"— *Carlyle.*

c Rev. John Harris.

hecatombs of human victims for its sacrifices. Where war has slain its thousands, gain has slaughtered its millions; for while the former operates only with the local and fitful terrors of an earthquake, the destructive influence of the latter is universal and increasing. Indeed, war itself—what has it often been but the art of gain practised on a larger scale? the covetousness of a nation resolved on gain, impatient of delay, and leading on its subjects to deeds of rapine and blood? Its history is the history of slavery and oppression in all ages. For centuries, Africa, one quarter of the globe, has been set apart to supply the monster with victims, thousands at a meal. And at this moment what a populous and gigantic empire can it boast! the mine, with its unnatural drudgery; the manufactory, with its swarms of squalid misery; the plantation, with its imbruted gangs; and the market and the exchange, with their furrowed and careworn countenances; these are only specimens of its more menial offices and subjects. Titles and honours are among its rewards, and thrones at its disposal. Among its counsellors are kings, and many of the great and mighty of the earth enrolled among its subjects. Where are the waters not ploughed by its navies? What imperial element is not yoked to its car? Philosophy itself has become a mercenary in its pay; and Science, a votary at its shrine, brings all its noblest discoveries, as offerings, to its feet. What part of the globe's surface is not rapidly yielding up its lost stores of hidden treasure to the spirit of gain? Scorning the childish dream of the philosopher's stone, it aspires to turn the globe itself into gold.[c]

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

1—4. (1) **that time,** ch. xi. 40—45. **Michael,** regarded as the protector of the Jewish nation, ch. x. 13, 21. **time of trouble,** prob. refer. to the last struggle against Antichrist.[a] **written,** ch. vii. 10.[b] (2) **sleep,** in death. **awake,** in the general resurrection. Some say, the *first* resurrection. **life,** *etc.*, Matt. xxv. 46. (3) **wise,** or teachers: ch. xi. 33, 35. These had been great lights in the world, so their reward is to shine for ever in more glorious spheres. (4) **shut . . words,** ch. viii. 26. "The charge is one of caution, not of absolute reservation: they only should see the words who were fit to see them."[c]

The good in the future (*v.* 3).—I. Their present character and conduct. 1. They are wise; 2. They turn many to righteousness; 3. The means they use for this end: 4. The ends accomplished are valuable: 5. This work is not confined to ministers. II. Their future reward. 1. They shall shine as the firmament; 2. Glory of the stars that of reflected light; 3. Stars of different magnitudes; 4. The glory of heaven will endure; 5. The obvious sense of the text is that the good will be exalted to high honour in the future. Learn:—(1) Study wisdom; (2) Study usefulness: (3) Be encouraged by the prospect of a vast reward.[d]

The salvation of souls the aim of the preacher.—A minister, in the early part of the seventeenth century, was preaching before an assembly of his brethren; and in order to direct their attention to the great motive from which they should act, he represented to them something of the great day of judgment. Having

a Comp. Ex. ix. 18, 24; Joel ii. 2; Je. xxx. 7; Mat. xxiv. 21.

b "The phrase alludes to the registers that used to be kept of the members of any city or corporation: the privileges of wh. society none can lay a claim to but those whose names are found in such registers."— *Lowth.*

c Spk. Com.

v. 1. *Dr. J. Duprè,* i. 166.

v. 2 *Dr. A. Rosse,* 149; *W. Dunlop,* i 327; *E. Brackenburn,* i. 361; *Bp. Jebb.* i, 241.

d Sigma in 400 Sks.

e & T. Adams,

spoken of Christ as seated on His throne, he described Him as speaking to His ministers; examining how they had preached, and with what views they had undertaken and discharged the duties of the ministry. "What did you preach for?" "I preached, Lord, that I might keep a good living that was left me by my father, which, if I had not entered the ministry, would have been wholly lost to me and my family." Christ addresses him, "Stand by, thou hast had thy reward." The question is put to another, "And what did you preach for?" "Lord, I was applauded as a learned man, and I preached to keep up the reputation of an excellent orator and an ingenious preacher." The answer of Christ to him also is, "Stand by, thou hast had thy reward." The Judge puts the question to a third. "And what did you preach for?" "Lord," saith he, "I neither aimed at the great things of this world, though I was thankful for the conveniences of life which Thou gavest me; nor did I preach that I might gain the character of a wit, or of a man of parts, or of a fine scholar; but I preached in compassion to souls, and to please and honour Thee; my design, Lord, in preaching, was that I might win souls to Thy blessed Majesty." The Judge was now described as calling out, "Room, men! room, angels! let this man come and sit with Me on My throne; he has owned and honoured Me on earth, and I will own and honour him through all the ages of eternity." The ministers went home much affected, resolving that through the help of God they would attend more diligently to the motives and work of the ministry than they had before done.

61; *Dr. E. Cobden*, 141; *W. Adey*, 172; *Dr. T. Leland*, iii. 57; *E. Sandercock*, ii. 131; *Dr. R. Graves*, iv. 467; *C. Coleman*, 365; *Bp. Heber*, 180.

v. 4. *H. Marriott*, 113; *F. H. Hutton*, 343.

"Gain may be temporary and uncertain; but ever while you live expense is constant and certain; and it is easier to build two chimneys than to keep one in fuel."—*Franklin.*

5—7. (5) **other two,** *i.e.* two other angel forms. **bank,** or lip. **river,** the Hiddekel. (6) **clothed in linen,** ch. x. 5. A foreshadowing manifestation of Christ. **upon the waters,** "indicating His power over the stream-like, fluctuating, unsubstantial powers of this world."[a] (7) **held,** *etc.*, comp. Re. x. 5. **time .. half,** *comp.* ch. vii. 25. **scatter,** *i.e.* accomplished His full and gracious designs in the scattering of the Jewish people.

The signs of the end (*v.* 6).—I. Signs of the end in the world. 1. Progress of false religion; 2. A rampant infidelity; 3. Persecution of the good; 4. Unbelief of the world. II. Signs in the Church. 1. Increased activities—missions; 2. Quickened zeal—personal effort; 3. New appliances—education, art, inventions.[b]

a Wordsworth.

"The end of learning is to know God, and out of that knowledge to love Him, and to imitate Him, as we may the nearest, by possessing our souls of true virtue."—*Milton.*

b W. W. Whythe.

8, 9. (8) **understood not,** *i.e.* the time was only told him in prophetical form, he could not translate it into actual years. (9) **go thy way,** *i.e.* do not press this question; let all be until God shall please to unfold it. **till the time,** or nearer the time.

Premonition of the end.—"My next undertaking," said Hogarth to a company of friends around his table, "shall be the 'End of all Things.'" "If that is the case," replied one of his friends, "your business will be finished; for there will be an end to the painter." "There will be so," answered Hogarth, sighing heavily; "and therefore the sooner my work is done the better." He began the next day, by grouping everything which denotes the end of all things,—a broken bottle; an old broom worn to the stump; the butt-end of an old firelock; a cracked bell; a bow unstrung; a crown tumbling into pieces; towers in ruins; the sign-post of a tavern called the "World's End," tumbling; the moon in her wane; the map of the globe burning; a gibbet fall-

v. 8. *Dr. McCrie*, iii. 28. *Bp. Halifax, Warb. Lec.* 99.

"The true way to gain much is never to desire to gain too much. If you desire not to be too poor, desire not to be too rich; he is not rich that possesses much, but he that covets no more; and he is not poor that enjoys little, but he

that wants too much. The contented mind wants nothing that he hath not; the covetous mind wants not only what he hath not, but likewise what he hath."—*J. Beaumont.*

ing, the body gone, and chains which held it falling down; Phœbus and his horse dead in the clouds; a vessel wrecked; Time, with his hour-glass and scythe broken, a tobacco-pipe in his mouth, the last whiff of smoke going out; a play-book open, with *exeunt omnes* stamped in the corner; an empty purse; and a statute of bankruptcy taken out against Nature. "So far so good," cried Hogarth: "nothing remains but this," taking his pencil in a sort of prophetic fury, and dashing off the similitude of a painter's palette broken. "Finis!" exclaimed Hogarth, "the deed is done, all is over." He never again took the palette in hand; and he died in about a year after he had finished this extraordinary tail-piece.

10, 11. (10) **made white**, the sign of purity. This is the design of persecution and trial. **wise . . understand**, "an honest and good heart is a necessary qualification for the receiving and understanding Divine truths." (11) **daily sacrifice**, *etc.*, ch. xi. 31.[a]

Common end.—Three thousand years and more ago, a proud Egyptian king returned to his capital from a great victory. To celebrate the event, he ordered a sculptor to portray the scene in the hardest stone. It was finished at last, after great expense and labour. The figures would look absurd enough to our eyes; but no doubt they were greatly admired in their own day. This block of sculptured stone withstood the wasting power of time for thousands of years, and at last attracted the attention of a learned and enthusiastic antiquarian—Mr. Abbott, of New York. With great pains he succeeded in removing it from its resting-place; and then, after the perils of a long sea-voyage, it was landed safely on our shores. How wonderful it seemed that such a work of art should endure for so many ages! Now it seemed probable that it might last a great many more in the museum for which it was destined; but, just as it reached its final resting-place, a careless carman tumbled it roughly on the pavement, and the block was shivered into hundreds of fragments. This, then, was the end for which it had been saved so long.[b]

12, 13. (12) **waiteth**, watchingly, expectantly. (13) **rest, in the grave. in thy lot**, as one of the glorified saints by-and-by.[a] The image is taken from the allotment of the earthly Canaan. The Prophet Daniel was at this time at least ninety years of age.

The way and the end (*v.* 13).—I. Describe the way Daniel was exhorted to walk in. 1. Self-denial and mortification; 2. Humility and prayer; 3. Faith; 4. Holiness. II. Point out the necessity of walking in that way. 1. God commands it; 2. Our salvation depends on our obedience; 3. It will redound to the glory of God. III. The advantages of obedience. 1. Thou shalt rest from a war with Nature, with Satan, with the world, from toil; 2. And stand in thy lot, among the holiest of the ransomed, a conqueror of the first order, near the throne of God.[b]

An American shopman.—In a town in Providence, America, there lived two young men, who were intimately acquainted. The one was truly pious; and the other, a shopman, paid no regard to Divine things. On one occasion the shopman took up a leaf of the Bible, and was about to tear it in pieces, and use it for packing up some small parcel in the shop, when the other said, "Do not tear that: it contains the word of eternal life."

a "The time is from the profanation of the temple by Antiochus in the month Ijar of the year 145 B.C. to the restoration of the worship by Judas Maccabeus on the 25th of Chisleu, and was, according to the Seleucid era, 1,290 days; 45 days more elapsed before Antiochus' death in the month Shebat, so ending the Jews' calamity."—*Maurer.*

b Christian Banner.

a "That the words contain a reference to and a belief in the resurrection is self-evident; his lot would fall to him in the heavenly Canaan."—*Spk. Com.*

b W. Stevens.

"When I see the heavenly sun buried under earth in the evening of the day, and in the morning find a resurrection of his glory, why (think I) may not the sons of heaven, buried in the earth in the

The young man, though he did not relish the reproof of his kind and pious friend, folded up the leaf, and put it in his pocket. Shortly after this, he said within himself, "Now I will see what kind of life it is of which this leaf speaks." On unfolding the leaf, the first words that caught his eye were the last in the book of Daniel: "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." He began immediately to inquire what his lot would be at the end of the days, and the train of thought thus awakened led to the formation of a religious character. By means so various are the purposes of Divine grace accomplished.—*The roll-call.*—A soldier, mortally wounded in a recent battle, was carried to the rear; and shortly after, all efforts to save him having failed, he was left for dead. But the army surgeon was suddenly recalled to his side by the word "Here!" "Did you want me?" he asked, listening eagerly by the dying lips. "No," replied the soldier, with a last effort; "I heard my name read out in the roll-call of heaven, and I was answering to it." And even as he spoke the words his spirit passed away.—*Where shall I go last of all?*—A Hindoo, of a thoughtful, reflecting turn of mind, but devoted to idolatry, lay on his death-bed. As he saw himself about to plunge into that boundless unknown, he cried out, "What will become of me?" "O," said a Brahmin, who stood by, "you will inhabit another body." "And where," said he, "shall I go then?" "Into another." "And where then?" "Into another, and so on, through thousands of millions." Darting across this whole period as though it were but an instant, he cried, "Where shall I go then?" Paganism could not answer, and he died agonising under the inquiry, "Where shall I go last of all?"

evening of their days, expect the morning of their glorious resurrection? Each night is but the past day's funeral, and the morning his resurrection: why then should our funeral sleep be otherwise than our sleep at night? Why should not we as well wake to our resurrection as in the morning? I see night is rather an intermission of day than a deprivation, and death rather borrows our life of us than robs us of it. Since, then, the glory of the sun finds a resurrection, why should not the sons of glory?" — *Warwick.*

Additional note on the authenticity of the Book of Daniel.—The alleged linguistic difficulties have been reduced, so far as the date of the book is concerned, to three or four Greek names of musical instruments; all of which, the instruments and their names, may naturally enough have been brought from Greece, the home of musical art, in the way of ordinary commercial intercourse. We are not called upon to defend the classic purity of Daniel's style. A Hebrew, and educated at the court of Babylon, it was natural that his Chaldee should be coloured with Hebrew forms, and his Hebrew with Chaldaisms. The argument from the general style of the book is in favour of its genuineness, not against it.

The commendations bestowed upon Daniel are thought to be inconsistent with his being the author of the book; some who admit its authenticity and its right to a place in the Sacred Canon, having been led by this consideration to adopt the opinion that Daniel, though essentially the author of the book, did not himself put it into its present form, but that some one of his countrymen put together his prophecies, prefixing to them introductory notices respecting its author. So far as the canonical authority of the book is con-

cerned there are no serious objections to this hypothesis; but we may well ask whether undue weight is not given to the objection under consideration? Throughout the whole book these commendatory notices are underlain by the idea that Daniel's wisdom is not his own, but is given him of God, and for purposes connected with the welfare of the covenant people. By revealing to His servant secrets beyond the ken of all the wise men of Babylon, He manifests at once His own infinite perfections and the vanity of the Chaldæan gods; and this Daniel records to the glory of the God of Israel.

The real objection to the book lies in the supernatural character of its contents; in the remarkable miracles and prophecies which it records. The miracles of this book are of a very imposing character, especially adapted to strike the minds of the beholders with awe and wonder; but so are those recorded in the beginning of the Book of Exodus. In both cases they are fitted to make upon the minds of the heathen, in whose presence they were performed, the impression of God's power to save and deliver in all possible circumstances. The prophecies are mostly in the form of dreams and visions; and they are in wonderful harmony with Daniel's position as a minister of state at the court of Babylon, and also with the relation of Judaism to the heathen world. In the providence of God, the history of His covenant people, and through them of the visible kingdom of heaven, had become inseparably connected with that of the great monarchies of the world. How appropriate, then, that God should reveal, in its grand outlines, the course of these monarchies to the final and complete establishment of the kingdom of heaven. In all this we find nothing against the general analogy of prophecy, but everything in conformity to it.—*Dr. E. P. Barrows.*

The Minor Prophets.

THE writings of the twelve minor Prophets were comprised in one book in the Hebrew Canon; and they acquired their appellation not from any supposed inferiority in their writings as to matter or style, but in reference to the brevity of their works (*Pinnock*). This precious collection contains the earliest as well as the latest writings of the Hebrew Prophets, except such as are embodied in the historical books; for Hosea, Joel, and Amos, at least, are older than Isaiah, and the three Prophets of the restoration are younger than Ezekiel and Daniel. The minor Prophets exhibit a great diversity of manner and style, the rugged and sententious, the full and flowing, the oratorical, and the simple and unadorned. In them are passages attaining to the sublimity of Isaiah, to the tenderness and pathos of Jeremiah, and to the vehemence of Ezekiel. Nowhere do we find sin rebuked with more awful severity, the true meaning of the law more clearly expounded, or the future glory of Zion more confidently predicted. That some of these writings are obscure and of difficult interpretation cannot be denied. This arises partly from the character of the style, as in the case of Hosea and others; partly from the nature of the themes discussed, as in Zechariah; partly from our ignorance of the times and circumstances of the writers. Nevertheless, the prayerful student will find in them a rich treasury of Divine truth, which will abundantly reward the labour bestowed upon it (*Dr. Burrows*).

HOSEA.

Introduction.

I. Author. HOSEA, = *Deliverance, safety*, son of Beeri (i. 1), not Beerah (1 Ch. v. 6). Prob. an Israelite, as (1) his predics. have most to do with Israel; and (2) his rough Aramaising diction sug. the N. as his residence. **II. Time.** 784—723 B.C. **III. Theme.** "The sins of the people, committed ag. mercy and privilege, are denounced in strong language; and judgment is threatened against them. Judah is to take warning by her sister's fall; and promises of forgiveness to the returning backslider, with predictions of future blessing, to have their accomplishment in Messianic times, are given and enforced." **Style.** "The language of Hos. is to us peculiarly difficult. His style is concise and abrupt, abounding with figs. and metaphors, wh. are often much intermixed; and the transitions fr. one subject and fig. to another are frequent and sudden. The particular occasions on which his prophecies were delivered are in themselves rarely obvious, and are never specified by the author. Some parts of them, however, are peculiarly pathetic, animated, and sublime" (*Angus*).

Additional note.—The book opens with what has generally been supposed to be an allegorical representation of the infidelity of the Prophet's wife, who bears him three children, with symbolical names, significant of God's judgment upon the house of Jehu and the kingdom of Israel. The whole represents the spiritual unfaithfulness of Israel to the covenant (chap. i., ii.) The rest of the book contains severe rebukes, interspersed with affecting invitations to repentance. The Christian subject is not prominent in Hosea; he alludes, however, to the calling of Christ from Egypt (xi. 1), and celebrates in sublime strains the triumph of the Redeemer and His people over the grave (xiii. 14; comp. 1 Cor. xv. 55). The narrative of Hosea's marriage we (*Angus*) have described as symbolical. Some (*Augustine, Grotius, Hosley*) regard it as literal history; others suppose that a marriage with an Israelitish woman is all that is intended; but most (*Jerome, Rossenm., Lowth, Hengs.*) regard it as an allegory only, or as a vision. It may be added, that the narrative exactness of the whole, and the use of names, are as consistent with the supposition that it is a parable or a vision, as with the supposition that it is a real occurrence which is described (Ez. xxiii.; Luke xvi. 20—31).

Synopsis.

(*According to Angus.*)

This Book may be divided into Two Parts.

I. A Symbolical Narrative ....chaps. i.—iii.

II. Prophetic Discourses ....chaps. iv.—xiv.

(*According to Horne.*)

Into Five Sections or Discourses.

Discourse I. .....i.—iii.
Discourse II. .....iv.—vi. 3
Discourse III. .....vi. 4—viii.
Discourse IV. .....ix.– xiii. 1—8
Discourse V. .....xiii. 9—xiv.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1. **word**, *etc.*, the common formula for prophetic inspiration.[a] **Hosea**, the name means *deliverance*, safety. He was prob. an Israelite.[b] "His rough Aramaising diction indicates the north as his residence."[c] **Beeri**, an unknown name, not the same as Beerah in 1 Chr. v. 6. **Uzziah**, *etc.*, 2 Chr. xxvi. 1, etc. **Jeroboam**, the second, in whose reign the kingdom of the Ten Tribes rose to the highest pitch of prosperity. After Jeroboam a period of anarchy ensued.

Scripture, kings, and truth (*v.* 1).—This verse leads us to consider them. I. The essence of Scripture. 1. It is a word; 2. A Divine word; 3. Concerning men; 4. A Divine word concerning man coming through man. II. The mortality of kings, kings die. 1. This fact is a blessing; 2. A lesson. III. The perpetuity of truth. 1. Adapted to all generations; 2. Is necessary for all generations.[d]

The prophecies of Hosea.—The prophecies of Hosea were addressed immediately to the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, yet so that he did not overlook Judah; for he considered the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel as constituting together the covenant people of God. Of his personal history we know nothing, except that he was the son of Beeri, for the transactions of the first three chapters may be best understood as symbolic acts seen only in vision. For anything that appears to the contrary, he was of Israelitish descent. As it is generally agreed that Isaiah began to prophesy in the last year of Uzziah's reign, or but a few years before his death, while Hosea prophesied in the reign of Jeroboam II., the great-grandson of Jehu, who died about twenty-six years before Uzziah, it follows that Hosea, though partly contemporary with Isaiah, was called to the prophetic work at an earlier period. If we suppose him to have commenced prophesying two years before the death of Jeroboam, and then add the remaining twenty-six years of Uzziah's reign, the sixteen of Jotham, the sixteen of Ahaz, and two of the first years of Hezekiah, we shall have a period of sixty-two years. To Israel this was a calamitous period, embracing four usurpations and murders of the reigning sovereigns, and three invasions of the Assyrians. In the last of those Hosea, king of Israel, became tributary to Shalmaneser, king of Assyria; but he proved unfaithful to his master, and sought the alliance of So, king of Egypt. For this the Assyrian king besieged him in Samaria, and after a siege of three years took him with the city, and put an end to the kingdom of Israel in the fifth year of Hezekiah, king of Judah. Hosea seems to have closed his writings when Hoshea was seeking the help of Egypt, while he had, at the same time, a covenant with Assyria, consequently somewhere early in Hezekiah's reign.[e]

a Comp. Joel i. 1; Mic. i. 1; Zep. i. 1.

b "He prophesied before the captivity of the ten tribes, to whom he chiefly directs his prophecy, and threatens them with a sudden destruction for their great and crying sins, wh. he, in all probability, lived to see brought upon them."—*Lowth.*

c *Ayre.*

d *Dr. Thomas.*

To be talked of as giving the best parties, as a most eloquent speaker, as the chief man in a little village, as the head of a small coterie, to fill other persons' mouths with silly tattle about ourselves, seems to be the ambition of most of us. To spend the day listlessly in looking for some new excitement, and the night as frivolously in that excitement, to keep up fictitious distinctions, and to select our friends and companions from those people who are well off and well known, rather than those who are clever, good, and great, seems to be the rule of most people.

e *Dr. Burrows.*

2, 3. (2) **beginning . . Hosea**, better, "the beginning of the Lord's talking with Hosea."[a] **wife . . whoredoms**, *i.e.* one who will be faithless to thee, and so represent the Israelitish nation as unfaithful to God.[b] Whoredom is the Bible figure for

a "The phrase 'spake with Hosea' in the Heb. is somewhat peculiar:

it seems to denote the internal converse which the Divine Spirit held with one who was intended to impart the communications he received to others."—*Spk. Com.*
b Poss. not externally acted, but internally, and in vision, as a pictorial illus. of Israel's unfaithfulness."—*Hengstenberg.*
c Fausset.
d Tennyson.

the sin of idolatry. (3) **Gomer,** *lit.* "Completion, daughter of grape-cakes;" prob. meaning "one completely given up to sensuality."[c]

Perfect wife.—

Eyes not down-dropp'd, nor over bright, but fed
With clear-pointed flame of chastity;
Locks not wide dispread,
Madonna-wise, on either side her head;
Sweet lips, whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of her perfect wifehood and pure lowlihood.
A courage to endure and to obey—
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
Crown'd Isabel, through all her placid life,
The queen of marriage—a most perfect wife.[d]

a "No child in the E. receives more than one name at its birth, and this name is generally given in accordance with some particular circumstance existing at the time."—*Gadsby.*

b 2 Ki. x. 11.

c "The express. *day* in the Prophets signifies a season marked out by Providence for some extraordinary act of God's justice or mercy."—*Lowth.*

d Ge. xlix. 24; Job xxix. 20. Comp. 1 Sa. ii. 4; Ps. xviii. 34; Je. xlix. 35.

e Dr. Thomas.

f Beecher.

4, 5. (4) **Jezreel,**[a] after the place where Ahab and Jezebel had committed their crimes. The word means, "God will scatter." **avenge,** visit in judgment.[b] **house,** or dynasty, see 2 Ki. xv. 12. **cease the kingdom,** it lasted only some forty or fifty years after the overthrow of Jehu's house. (5) **that day,** or season.[c] **bow,** the chief weapon of the warrior in those days, and the symbol of power.[d] **valley of Jezreel,** or plain of Esdraelon.

Retribution (*v.* 5).—I. God's retribution takes away the power of its victim. II. God's retribution despises the prestige of its victim. III. God's retribution defies the opposition of its victim.[e]

Responsibility of the care of children.—It is a very solemn and serious matter for you to be entrusted with the care of God's little children. One would think, to see the mating that goes on in society—and it is a beautiful thing in its way—that butterflies were let loose, so light and gay and happy are the hearts that sail together and play around each other. One would think, to hear the cheerful congratulations that accompany the putting out of a young life in the family state, that there was no responsibility connected with the event. And when there begin to be "angels unawares" coming into the household, one after another, how joyous it is! And the silver cups and little congratulatory notes are plenty. But how few there are who feel that, from the time the door of life opens, and a child is born, God has drawn His hand out from near to His own heart and lent something of Himself to the parent, and said, "Keep it till I come; take this, My own child, and educate it for Me, and bring it to heaven, and let its improving and its profiting appear when ye and it stand together in the last day." It is a very solemn thing to have a family, and to have children, of which you are not the parent, but only the guardian and the guide, and in some sense the saviour.[f]

a "The birth and naming of this child mark a further phase of the northern kingdom: it is

6, 7. (6) **Lo-ruhamah,** meaning, "Not pitied, not favoured."[a] "Israel forfeited God's love and pity by unfaithfulness to Him." **utterly . . away,** so that they should never be restored again *as a nation.* (7) **mercy,** in prolonging her day of grace, and restoring her *as a nation.* **by the Lord,** by special Divine inter-

vention, not by mere human instrumentalities. **battle,** or resources of the warrior. Ref. may in part be to the overthrow of Sennacherib, in part to the restoration from Babylon; both being miraculous interventions.

The vanity of positive philosophy (*v.* 7).—Here we learn—1. That all human and material succours are alone and by themselves inadequate; 2. That Divine succours are alone and by themselves adequate; 3. That in all cases such Divine succours are therefore to be solely trusted.[b]

8, 9. (8) **weaned,** in the E. children are usually nursed by the mother for nearly three years.[a] (9) **Lo-ammi,** meaning, "not my people."

Little children.—"I am fond of children. I think them the poetry of the world, the fresh flowers of our hearts and homes; little conjurers, with their 'natural magic,' evoking by their spells what delights and enriches all ranks, and equalises the different classes of society. Often as they bring with them anxieties and cares, and live to occasion sorrow and grief, we should get along very badly without them. Only think if there never were anything anywhere but grown-up men and women, how we should long for the sight of a little child! Every infant comes into the world like a delighted prophet, the harbinger and herald of good tidings, whose office it is to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and to draw 'the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.' A child softens and purifies the heart, warming and melting it by its gentle presence; enriches the soul by new feelings, awakens in it what is favourable to virtue. It is a beam of light, a fountain of love, a teacher whose lessons few can resist. Infants recall us from much that endangers and encourages selfishness, and freezes the affections, roughens the manners, indurates the heart; they brighten the home, deepen love, invigorate exertion, infuse courage, and vivify and sustain the charities of life. It would be a miserable world, I do think, if it was not embellished by little children."[b]

10, 11. (10) **yet .. sea,** the threatenings apply to their *national* life. Their actual numbers would be preserved. Some think the assurance refers to the ingathering from all nations to the Church of Christ.[a] **in the place,** the same district. Israel would return with Judah from captivity, but would not exist as a separate people. The return was the Divine recognition of penitence and conversion. (11) **one head,** or prince.[b] **out of the land,** *i.e.* the captive land.

The destiny of the race (*vv.* 10, 11).—I. The race is destined to an indefinite increase in the number of good men. II. The race is destined to a transcendent privilege. 1. To a general conversion to God; 2. To a general adoption into the family of God. III. The race is destined to a common leadership—1. Which shall unite the most hostile; 2. Be by common appointment; 3. And be glorious.[c]

The future.—
For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonders that would be:
Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of mighty sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight drooping down with costly bales.

now presented in the character of a daughter who by her own shameless profligacy has utterly lost her father's affection."—*Spk. Com.*

b Dr. Clark.

a Comp. notes on Ge. xxi. 8.

v. 9. *Dr. G. Croft,* ii. 1. "In a loving Christian family, which is the true type of a generous commonwealth, all things gravitate to the cradle. If you can sing, then you have a song for the baby. If you can frolic, then you must frolic with the baby. If you are expert in making merriment, the baby must have the advantage of it. If the child is sick, the grown folks are the ones to be still. Everything at the top goes to the bottom in the realm of love."—*Beecher.*

b T. Binney.

a So *Wordsworth.* Ro. ix, 25, 29; 1 Pe. ii. 10.

b Most perfectly fulfilled in Messiah, the Christ.

"This prophecy denotes not a local remove, but a spiritual ascent to Christ."—*Mat. Henry.*

v. 11. *G. Curry, Huls. Lec.* 153.

c Dr. Thomas.

"O, if this were seen, the happiest youth,—viewing his progress

through what perils past, what crosses to ensue, —would shut the book and sit him down and die."—*Shakespeare.*

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew
From the nation's airy navies grappling in the centre blue:
Far along the world-wide whisper of the south wind rushing warm,
Were the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunder-storm,
Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled,
In the Parliament of man, the federation of the world.
There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.[d]

d Tennyson.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—5. (1) **Ammi . . Ruhamah,** the names of the prev. ch., without the Heb. negative *lo.* The *not* would be removed from their names in the day of restoration: ch. i. 11. (2) **mother,** *i.e.* the nation collectively.[a] **not my wife,** Is. l. 1. **breasts,** Eze. xxiii. 3. (3) **strip her,** of wealth, population, land, etc. **born,** Eze. xvi. 4. **wilderness,** *comp.* Is. lviii. 11; Je. xxxi. 12.[b] **thirst,** as one in a parched desert; Je. ii. 6. (4) **children,** who were devoted to the service of idols. (5) **after my lovers,**[c] away from God, her true and only Husband. **bread,** *etc., i.e.* my food, clothing, and luxuries.

Lot of woman.—Woman's is comparatively a fixed, a secluded, and a meditative life. She is more the companion of her own thoughts and feelings; and if they are turned to ministers of sorrows, where shall she look for consolation? Her lot is to be wooed and won; and if unhappy in her love, her heart is like some fortress that has been captured, and sacked, and abandoned, and left desolate. How many bright eyes grow dim—how many soft cheeks grow pale—how many lovely forms fade away into the tomb, and none can tell the cause that blighted their loveliness? As the dove will clasp its wings to its side, and cover and conceal the arrow that is preying on its vitals, so is it the nature of woman to hide from the world the pangs of wounded affection. The love of a delicate female is always shy and silent. Even when fortunate, she scarcely breathes it to herself; but when otherwise, she buries it in the recesses of her bosom, and there lets its cower and brood among the ruins of her peace. With her, the desire of her heart has failed—the great charm of her existence is at an end. She neglects all the cheerful exercises which gladden the spirits, quicken the pulse, and send the tide of life in healthful currents through the veins. Her rest is broken, the sweet refreshment of sleep is poisoned by melancholy dreams. "dry sorrow drinks her blood," until her enfeebled frame sinks under the slightest external injury. Look for her, after a little while, and you will find friendship weeping over her untimely grave, and wondering that one, who but lately glowed with all the radiance of health and beauty, should so speedily be brought down to "darkness and the worm." You will be told of some casual indisposition that laid her low; but no one knows the mental malady that sapped her strength and made her so easy a prey to the spoiler.[d]

a "The Prophet urgently calls upon all who in the northern kingdom still remained firm in their allegiance to Jehovah to come promptly forward, and make an earnest and public protest against the idolatry and wickedness which so widely prevailed."—*Spk. Com.*

b Je. vi. 8; Zep. ii. 13.

c "The idols with whom the Israelites committed spiritual fornication; and the idolatrous nations, whose alliance the Israelites courted, and in order to it practised their idolatries."—*Lowth.*

Je. xxii. 20, 22; Eze. xvi. 33, 36, 37, xxiii. 5, 9.

v. 2. *J. C. Dieteric, Ant.* 722.

d Washington Irving.

6—8. (6) **hedge**, *etc.*, reference is to "the hindrances which the captivity interposed bet. Israel and her idols."[a] **find her paths**, by which she had been wont to go to her lovers, or idols. (7) **follow**, eagerly. **I will go**, or let me now go. "Her language at present is hardly that of penitence; she is only casting about to be rid of her misery."[b] (8) **I**, Jehovah, the true and only source of all good. **prepared**, or made; bestowed, as offerings, on Baal; the grossest insult to Jehovah. They gave Jehovah's gifts to Baal.[c]

Divine restraints (*v.* 6).—God puts restraints on the sinner here. I. These restraints are manifold. 1. Affliction; 2. Public sentiment; 3. Conscience. II. These restraints are necessary. 1. For the sinner himself; 2. For the world; 3. For the Church.[d] —*The wanderer's return* (*v.* 7).—I. The relation. II. The desertion. III. The return. 1. It is brought about by Divine interposition; 2. It is accompanied with heartfelt contrition and confession of sin; 3. Its genuineness is manifested by the fruit. —*The first husband* (*v.* 7).—I. A resolution formed. 1. A mystical union adverted to; 2. A violation of this union acknowledged; 3. A purpose to renew this union avowed. II. A reason expressed upon which this resolution is founded—for then it was better. 1. Better as it is more honourable; 2. More comfortable; 3. More safe.[e]

Hedge of thorns.—That thorn hedges were cultivated for defence, and that it was difficult, if not impossible, to break through such a fence is evidently implied in this declaration, which is evidently founded upon the practice of the Eastern people. Thus Du Tott (vol. ii. p. 312) informs us that "the Indian fig tree of which the hedges are formed, serves as an insurmountable barrier for the security of the fields." So also a recent traveller states, "As we rode through Rihhah, we perceived it to be a settlement of about fifty dwellings, all very mean in their appearance, and every one fenced in front with thorny bushes, while a barrier of the same kind encircled the whole of the town. This was one of the most effectual defences which they could have raised against the incursions of horse Arabs, the only enemies whom they have to dread, as neither will the horse approach to entangle himself in these thickets of briar, nor could the rider, even if he dismounted, get over them, or remove them to clear a passage, without assistance from someone within.[f]

9—11. (9) **return**, or act towards her in quite a different manner. **recover**, or take back. (10) **lewdness**, *lightness, folly, vileness.* **sight . . lovers**, the idols who will be wholly helpless to deliver her. (11) **mirth**, *etc.*, the characteristic of her festal times.[a]

Royal continency.—Antiochus, the third king of Macedon, perceiving a growing passion for the priestess of Diana, a young lady of incomparable beauty, left his palace and retired for some time into Ephesus; lest the sight of such an alluring object might tempt him to transgress against the piety due to her order.[b]—Henry IV., king of England, though unhappy in his family and government, was nevertheless possessed of many virtues. He was so remarkable for his chastity, that before his marriage he would not allow any lady of a suspicious character and unguarded conduct to frequent the court; and having ob-

[a] "I will obstruct the roving vagrancy after thy idols; I will stop it up by afflictions and banishment into a far-off land; and thus I will show the vanity of thy idols, who cannot save thee in thy distress." —*Wordsworth.*

Job xix. 8; La. iii. 7, 9.

[b] "Her afflictions will bring her to a sense of her duty, and the happiness she enjoyed as long as she cleaved stedfastly unto God." —*Lowth.*

[c] Some trans. "of which they made Baal."

vv. 6, 7. *W. Jay*, ii. 82.

v. 8. *J. Williams*, 69; *C. Heurtley*, i. 141; *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Kgs.* 129.

[d] *Dr. Thomas.*

[e] *Beta* in 400 Sks.

[f] *Buckingham.*

[a] These had been arranged by Jeroboam I.—1 Ki. xii. 32.

[b] "Though in the principal streets, or bazaars, all was activity, yet there seemed to me to be a kind of deathliness over the whole. There was no hilarity, no joyousness, no mirth, the 'voice of gladness' having ceased."—*Gadsby.*

served one day some ladies with their bosoms uncovered, he turned away his eyes from them and reprimanded them smartly in the simple dialect of the times: "Fie, fie," said he, "for shame; forsooth, ye be to blame."[c]

12, 13. (12) **destroy**, marg. *make desolate.* **my rewards**, *v.* 5. **forest**, a wild place, unhedged, where fruit cannot be found. **beasts**, *i.e.* wild beasts. (13) **visit upon**, the usual term for bringing judgments upon: I will punish her. **days of Baalim**, time of her wilful service to the various forms of Baal.[a] **burned incense**, intended to stand for, and include, all offerings and worship, the entire heathen *cult.* **earrings**, or nose-rings, Ge. xxiv. 47.

The prosperity of the wicked (*v.* 12).—These verses lead us to look upon wicked men in three aspects. I. As prospering in the world. II. As ascribing their prosperity to wrong causes. III. Devoting their prosperity to wrong objects. Deprived of their prosperity by the great God.[b]

14—17. (14) **allure**, *cajole, wheedle, over-persuade.*[a] **comfortably**, lit. *to her heart; i.e.* tenderly, persuasively.[b] **vineyards**, *etc., i.e.* make the land that had become a wilderness again fruitful for her. **valley of Achor**, a rich pasture ground near Jericho; classed with Sharon.[c] **sing**, in the joy of deliverance and restoration.[d] (16) **Ishi**, *my husband;* the term of endearment, and of pleasant relations. **Baali**, *my Lord*, the term of fear and slavery. (17) **Baalim**, *see v.* 13.

The valley of trouble a door of hope (*v.* 15).—I. The soul was at first betrothed and espoused of God; each several soul ought to be so. II. Here you have the case of a soul that has strayed from God and its rest. III. It has deserted God and gone after its lovers—and what are the results? 1. There is the discipline of disappointment; 2. There is the discipline of deprivation; 3. There is the discipline of desolation.[e]

Vanity of hope.—

Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all
That men have deemed substantial since the fall,
Yet has she wondrous virtue to educe
From emptiness itself a real use;
And while she takes, as at a father's hand,
What health and sober appetite demand,
From fading good derives what chemic art,
That lasting happiness, a thankful heart,
Hope, with uplifted foot, set free from earth,
Pants for the place of her ethereal birth,
On steady wings sails through the immense abyss,
Plucks amaranthine joys from bowers of bliss,
And crowns the soul, while yet a wanderer here,
With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.
Hope, as an anchor, firm and sure, holds fast
The Christian vessel, and defies the blast.
Hope! let the wretch, once conscious of the joy,
Whom now despairing agonies destroy,
Speak, for he can, and none so well as he,
What treasures centre, what delights in thee.
Had he the gems, the spices, and the land,
That boasts the treasure all at his command,

b L. M. Stretch.

c Ibid.

vv. 8, 9. *W. Jay,* iv. 77.

a Baal, in the plural Baalim, denotes Baal as worshipped under different characters.

"So long as lust (whether of the world or flesh) smells sweet in our nostrils, so long we are loathsome to God."—*Cotton.*

b Thomas.

a "As used here the verb strikingly illus. the difficulty which the Almighty has in persuading the guilty conscience to believe in His love."—*Spk. Com.*

b Is. xl. 1, 2.

c Is. lxv. 10.

"The valley of Achor runs up fr. Gilgal towards Bethel. There Achan was stoned, and the Divine indignation removed. The word Achor means *trouble, affliction,* and it is just possible that from it we get our word *ache.* The Lord promises to lead Israel to peace and rest through the valley of trouble." — *Bib. Things.*

d Ex. xv. 1, 20.

v. 14. *Dr. E. B. Pusey,* i. 188; *R. W. Dibdin,* 218; *R. A. Suckling,* 226; *C. Bradley,* 21; *A. Roberts,* iii. 49.

v. 15. *Jon. Edwards,* ii. 838.

e Dr. C. J. Vaughan.

The fragrant grove, the inestimable vine,
Were light, when weighed against one smile of thine.*f*

18–20. (18) **covenant**, *etc.*, Job v. 23. Indicating assured protection from the wild creatures that had taken up their abode in the wilderness land. **break the bow**, indicating security from surrounding enemies. **lie down safely**, Eze. xxxiv. 25. (19) **betroth**, the formality that was preliminary to marriage, and regarded as quite as binding. The new covenant is likened to a marriage covenant bec. there would be so much love and grace in it.[a] **righteousness**, *etc.*, terms assuring the sincerity of the bond, and the deep feeling expressed in it. (20) **faithfulness**, or fidelity.

The sublime privileges of the good (*vv.* 18, 19).—All men might enjoy these privileges. 1. Inferior creatures might be Divinely restrained from injuring them; 2. Human enemies might be made to submit to them; 3. They might enjoy a perfect security; 4. They might enjoy vital union with the everlasting fountain of goodness. Learn:—The supreme importance of moral goodness to man.[b]

21–23. (21) **will hear**, *etc.*, this, and the following *v.*, indicate the union of the whole people and land in supplication.[a] (22) **Jezreel**, here used not in its meaning, "God will *scatter*," but in its meaning, "God will *plant*." (23) **sow**, the idea in the word Jezreel, *sow* or *plant*. **will say**, *etc.*, Rom. ix. 26; 1 Pe. ii. 10.

God and His universe (*vv.* 21–28).—I. That the operations of the universe are under the intelligent direction of the great God. This will—1. Account for the unbroken order of nature; 2. Should impress us with the sanctity of nature. II. That the operations of the universe are generally conducted upon the mediatorial principle. III. That they are mercifully subordinated to the interests of the good.[b]

Wisdom displayed in the creation.—We are raised by science to an understanding of the infinite wisdom and goodness which the Creator has displayed in all His works. Not a step can we take in any direction without perceiving the most extraordinary traces of design; and the skill everywhere conspicuous is calculated in so vast a proportion of instances to promote the happiness of living creatures, and especially of ourselves, that we feel no hesitation in concluding, that if we knew the whole scheme of Providence, every part would appear to be in harmony with a plan of absolute benevolence. Independently, however, of this most consoling inference, the delight is inexpressible of being able to follow the marvellous works of the Great Author of nature, and to trace the unbounded power and exquisite skill which are exhibited by the most minute, as well as the mightiest parts of His system.[c]

f Cowper.

a "A marriage covenant wherein I will display My attributes of righteousness, and equity, of loving-kindness, mercy, and faithfulness."—*Lowth.* "So binding is the betrothal engagement that any improprieties committed by the girl are visited with the severities due to unfaithfulness after marriage."—*Bib. Things.*
b Dr. Thomas.

a "God would hearken to the skies, as it were supplicating Him to fill them with rain to pour on the earth; and that the skies again would hearken to the earth begging for a supply of the rain it requires: and again, that the earth would hearken to the corn, wine, and oil, begging it to bring them forth; and these again would hear Jezreel, *i.e.* would fulfil Israel's prayers for a supply of them."—*Fausset.* "The ears of the elements are unsealed by human obedience. If man hearken to God, all God's creation will hearken to him."—*Wordsworth.*
b Dr. Thomas.
c Brougham.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1–3. (1) **go yet**, or again. **woman**, prob. the same Gomer, who had been removed from the Prophet. **friend**, the Heb. term means *husband*. **flagons of wine**, better *raisin-cakes*, a special offering made to idols. Either cakes of compressed raisins, or cakes in the making of wh. raisins were used.[a] (2) **bought**

a "They seem to symbolise the voluptuous and self-indulgent character of idolatrous rites in

general." — *Spk. Com.*

b Harmer.

"Nonsense! there needs no satire on men's rage for gold, their nature is the best one, and excuse."—*Bailey.*

a "Tutelary household gods, in the shape of human busts cut off at the waist." —*Maurer.*

b So *Kimchi.*

v. 4. *Dr. Donne*, v. 159; *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 287.

v. 5. *R. Allestree*, 227; *R. Robinson*, 438; *H. Worthington*, 85.

"For gold the hireling judge distorts the laws; wealth heap'd on wealth, nor truth nor safety buys, the dangers gather as the treasures rise."—*Johnson.*

"Lust is an immoderate wantonness of the flesh, a sweet poison, a cruel pestilence; a pernicious poison, which weakeneth the body of man, and effeminateth the strength of an heroic mind." —*Quarles.*

c Fulk Greville.

a "The expression is taken from the actions or pleas wh. one man hath against another for injuries or damages received."—*Louth.*

b "Integrity and

her, or arranged to provide for her. **barley**, for her food. (3) **abide**, *etc.*, be separate, continue in a solitary condition.

Trade in the East.—Sir J. Chardin observed in the East, that in their contracts for their temporary wives, which are known to be frequent there, which contracts are made before the kady, there is always the formality of a measure of corn mentioned, over and above the sum of money that is stipulated. I do not know of anything that should occasion this formality of late days in the East; it may then possibly be very ancient, as it is apparent this sort of wife is; if it be, it will perhaps account for Hosea's purchasing a woman of this sort for fifteen pieces of silver and a certain quantity of barley.[b]

4, 5. (4) **children of Israel**, the ten tribes. **without .. teraphim**, even as Hosea's wife was separated for a while from her wifely privileges. *Teraphim*[a] are mentioned Ge. xxxi. 19—35, but the word is trans. "images." (5) **David**, *comp.* Je. xxx. 9; Eze. xxxiv. 23. **latter days**, Is. ii. 2. The times of Messiah.[b]

Reality of religion.—

"For sure in all kinds of hypocrisy
No bodies yet are found of constant being;
No uniform, no stable mystery,
No inward nature, but an outward seeming;
No solid truth, no virtue, holiness.
But types of these, which time makes more or less.
And from these springs strange inundations flow,
To drown the sea-marks of humanity
With massacres, conspiracy, treason, woe,
By sects and schisms profaning Deity:
Besides, with furies, fiends, earth, air, and **hell**,
They fit, and teach confusion to rebel.
But, as there lives a true God in the heaven,
So is there true religion here on earth:
By nature? No, by grace; not got, but given;
Inspired, not taught; from God a second birth;
God dwelleth near about us, even within,
Working the goodness, censuring the sin.
Such as we are to Him, to us is He.
Without God there was no man ever good;
Divine the author and the matter be,
Where goodness must be wrought in flesh and blood:
Religion stands not in corrupted things,
But virtues that descend have heavenly wings."[c]

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—5. (1) **controversy**, Mic. vi. 2. A judicial ground of complaint, an accusation to make.[a] **no truth**, *etc.*, Pr. iii. 3;[b] Mic. vi. 8. (2) **swearing**, *etc.*, blasphemous language. **break out**, or through. Scorning all reasonable bonds and limitations. **blood**, *etc.*, one violent deed follows close on the heels of another. (3) **languish**, Is. xix. 8, xxiv. 4; Joel i. 10, 12. **sea**, used in the Bible of all bodies of water. (4) **strive**, against the prevailing evil, bec. its cure is hopeless. **strive .. priest**,

i.e. as those who will even resist the counsels and warnings of a priest.[c] (5) **destroy thy mother**, *i.e.* the Israelitish State, of which the citizens are regarded as the children.

A terrible depriration (*vv.* 3—5).—I. It is a deprivation both of material and spiritual good. 1. Of material good health, means of subsistence; 2. Of spiritual good. II. It is a deprivation leading to a terrible doom. 1. The destruction of priests and people; 2. Of the social state.

6—8. (6) **lack of knowledge**, ignorance of the true principles of religion.[a] The only true wisdom is knowledge of God. **no priest**, though God regarded them before as a nation of priests.[b] **forget**, or purposely ignore. (7) **increased**, or Divinely blessed.[c] **sinned**, *etc.*, "employing their influence in accelerating the religious degeneracy of the nation." (8) **eat**, *etc.*, fig. for seeking their own advantage from the idolatries of the people. **set . . iniquity**, they earnestly strive to encourage the people in their idolatry.

Ignorance is the parent of destruction (*v.* 6).—I. What kind of knowledge is meant? 1. Not historical but experimental; 2. Not theoretical but practical; 3. Not scientific but evangelical. How does ignorance cause destruction? 1. Unless sin be pardoned the soul will be destroyed; 2. No sin can be pardoned without Christ; 3. There can be no interest in Christ without faith; 4. There can be no faith without knowledge.[d]

9—11. (9) **like . . priest**, Is. xxiv. 2. **punish them**, *i.e.* both of them, those that go astray and those that lead astray. (10) **eat**, *v.* 8. **not increase**, licentiousness places limits on the natural increase of a population. (11) **new wine**, or drunkenness.[a] Such vicious self-indulgences always deprive men of their judgments, and darken their understandings.[b]

The reciprocal influence of priesthood and people (*v.* 2).—"Like priest, like people." I. There is sometimes a disgraceful reciprocal influence. 1. When the true priest becomes like the people; 2. When the people become like a bad priest. II. There is sometimes an honourable reciprocal influence. 1. When people become like a true priest; 2. When the true priest has succeeded in making the people like him.[c]

12—14. (12) **stocks**, Je. ii. 27; Ha. ii. 19. **staff**, by wh. men divined.[a] (13) **sacrifice**, *etc.*, Is. i. 29, etc.[b] **poplar**, Heb. *libueh:* the white poplar;[c] one of the catkin-bearing group of trees (*Amentaceæ*). (14) **I will not**, better as marg. *Shall I not?* **fall**, or come under punishment.

Divination by rods.—"During our stay in Constantinople we were fortunate in meeting with one specimen of great antiquity and of considerable Biblical interest. This was a beautiful alabaster bas-relief, in excellent preservation, representing the ancient practice of shabdomancy, or divination by rods. There is one allusion to this form of superstition in Hosea iv. 12, from which it appears that the revolted Israelites had adopted it, in common with so many other heathen practices: 'My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them.' One mode of divining by this means was to set up a number of rods in the earth, and when they fell, during the muttering of certain verses and incantations, to derive the wished-for passages from the direction of the fall. But another method was for a

mercy or compassionate sympathy make up the sum of man's duty to man."—*Spk. Com.*

c Dr. Thomas.

a See 2 Chr. xi. 14.

b Ex. xix. 6.

c "The greater were the favours I heaped upon them, the more presumptuously they sinned against Me."—*Lowth.*

v. 6. *W. Pemble*, 551; *Dr. T. Rennell*, 269.

d W. W. Whythe.

a Is. xxviii. 1, 7, 8.

b "A moral truth applicable to all times. The special ref. here is to the licentious orgies connected with the Syrian worship, wh. lured Israel away from the pure worship of God."—*Fausset.*

Am. iv. 1.

c Dr. Thomas.

a "The false prophets of old often pretended to divine and even perform miracles with their staves, ... just as our sleight of hand men with their wands pretend to do so many wonderful things, though it is the quickness of their hands and not their wands at all."—*Gadsby.*

b Is. lvii. 5, 7; Eze. vi. 13, xx. 28.

c "It is to be

person to take a rod and measure its length by spans, saying each time alternately, 'I will go: I will not go;' or, 'I will do: I will forbear;' and then he decided, according to the alternative which was associated with the last span. It is this second method that is represented in the bas-relief we are describing. A woman is the diviner, and two persons are consulting her, and waiting her decision with an interest evidently not unmixed with fear. This alabaster was drawn up a few years since by some fishermen from the Bosphorus, near its entrance to the Black Sea, opposite the sacred promontory of Jupiter Oarios, on which was a temple to which mariners used to resort and pray for favourable winds. It is supposed to date five hundred years before Christ."[d]

found by the waysides near villages. In the outskirts of towns it is sometimes met with bordering the roads. In every case it is noted for the cool shade it affords in the heat of the day."—*Duns.*

d *Dr. A. Thomas.*

15—19. (15) **Judah offend,** this is a gracious warning for the kingdom of Judah, wh. was in danger of being led away into the idolatries of the sister-kingdom.[a] **Gilgal,** noted for the worship of idol-gods.[b] **Beth-aven,** same as Bethel,[c] where Jeroboam's calf-worship was established. **the Lord liveth,** *comp.* Am. v. 5. There seems to be a ref. to going to Beersheba, the well of the *oath.* (16) **heifer,** stubborn. difficult to drive, unwilling to come under the yoke. **feed them,** *etc*, perhaps ironical, and intended to say that God would scatter them like sheep in the large country of Assyria. (17) **joined to idols,** wholly devoted to idols. **let him alone,** cease attempting to restrain or to change him.[d] (18) **sour,** gone bad. (19) **wind,** *etc.*, the storm-wind of Divine judgment.

a "Despairing of Israel, the Prophet has still some hope of Judah, whom, therefore, he will fain save from becoming involved in Israel's sin."—*Spk. Com.*

b Comp. Ho. ix. 15, xii. 11; Am. iv. 5, v. 5.

c Bethel means *House of God,* Bethaven, *House of vanity.*

d "Leave him to his fate."

Let him alone (*v.* 17).—I. The sinful alliance—1. Illegal; 2. Unnatural; 3. Degrading; 4. Irrational. II. The ruinous alliance. The soul may be said to be let alone—1. When it seeks satisfaction apart from God; 2. When the blood of the atonement is set at nought; 3. When the Gospel has lost its power to convince; 4. The sentence "Let him alone" will have a future application to the sinner's state.[e]

v. 17. *W. Jay,* ii. 211; *J. Summerfield,* 28.

e *J. H. Jackson.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1, 2. (1) **hear,** *etc.*, see Joel i. 2; Mic. i. 2; Is. i. 2. **house of Israel,** the northern nation. **house . . king,** the royal court, including the court officers. **judgment,** or sentence. **snare,** or such a snare as may be found on Mizpah, spread to catch birds, etc.[a] **Mizpah,** prob. a hill in Gilead. **Tabor,** Jer. iv. 6, 12, 14. (2) **profound,** they lay deep and cunning designs. **a rebuker,** or correction. God had sent warnings by His Prophets.

National depravity (*vv.* 1—3).—1. Priests and people are involved in it; 2. Unfaithfulness to God is a proof of it; 3. The Judge of the world is cognisant of it.[b]

a "Ye have laid snares for others, just as hunters spread their nets upon mountains and hills to catch their prey."—*Loweth.*

b *Dr. Thomas.*

3—5. (3) **know Ephraim,** have full understanding of all her wilfulness and sin. **not hid,** Ps. lxix. 5. (4) **frame,** or fashion and order; show a set purpose to turn to God.[a] (5) **pride,** self-will, and self-conceit, which are the secret force of idolatry. This pride should be openly humbled.[b]

Necessary preliminaries to a godly life (*v.* 4).—How are men to frame their doings as to turn to God? I. By thinking on certain subjects. II. By thinking of those subjects in a certain way. 1. With concentration; 2. With persistency; 3. With de-

a In the north of England the word *frame* is still used as meaning *set about a thing.*

b "Trans. 'Therefore humbled shall be the pride of Israel in his own sight.'"—*Spk. Com.*

votion. III. By thinking on certain subjects with a practical intent. Apply:—Thoughtlessness is the curse of humanity; think on the right subjects; think in the right way.[c]

6, 7. (6) with their flocks, *i.e.* prepared to offer large and valuable sacrifices. not find, bec. the day of grace will be past, and the day of judgment will be come. withdrawn, 1 Sa. xxviii. 15. (7) treacherously, as a wife false to her husband. month, or the new moon.[a] portions, *i.e.* portions of land they inherited. The destruction would affect both people and country.[b]

Too late (*v.* 5).—This verse directs us to two subjects of thought. I. The most important of all works—to seek the Lord. 1. All men should engage in it; 2. All men must attend to it sooner or later. II. The most important of all works undertaken too late.[c]

8—12. (8) cornet, *Heb.* "bent back trumpet." Gibeah, four miles N. of Jerus. trumpet, *Heb.* "straight trumpet." Ramah, two miles further N. The trumpet was to be blown to summon the tribes to repel the Assyrian invader. (9) day of rebuke, "time when the sinner's doings are laid bare." (10) remove the bound,[a] De. xxvii. 17. like water, in full flood. (11) broken, *etc.*, delivered over to oppressors in God's just judgment. commandment, Jeroboam's idolatrous command. (12) moth, to garments. rottenness, or a worm to wood.

The moth, or God's quiet method of destroying (*v.* 12).—I. He works decay thus sometimes in the bodies of men. II. And in the enterprises of men. III. And in the kingdoms of men.[b]

13—15. (13) sickness, political adversity. event . . Assyrian, seeking alliances.[a] Jareb, or the king that should plead for him. not heal, bec. no political aid could touch the national moral evils, which were the real cause of calamity. (14) lion, roaring and devouring. young lion, or strong lion. (15) go, *etc.*, waiting until judgment shall effectually humble.[b] early, the fig. for *earnestly*.

God's end and design in affliction (*v.* 15).—I. The procuring cause of God's afflicting His people. 1. We see how unwilling God is to afflict His people; 2. Whence the many sufferings of the Church arise. II. God's way of afflicting His people: the withdrawing of His gracious presence is the source of greatest suffering to the Church. III. The end of God in thus afflicting His people, "till they acknowledge," etc. 1. God's intention to bring them to sorrow for sin; 2. The power of these means for accomplishing it; affliction concentrates the thoughts of a man upon himself; drives a man off from worldly comforts, and brings him back to God.[c]

Crosses.—I begin to find that crosses are requisite to assist us in our walk with God. Things that are disagreeable to flesh and blood tend to tire one of the world. There is much meant by that expression, "In their affliction they will seek Me early." I find so much benefit derived from having things that cross me, that I begin to count my crosses among my choicest mercies. I have, indeed, the feelings common to human nature, and experience now and then considerable depression when certain providences bear hard upon me; but without them, Jeshurun-like, I wax fat and kick; my mind becomes inactive and slothful. It is not surprising that some of God's dear people are, from the

v. 5. *H. Owen*, ii. 55.
c F. W. Robertson.

a "By a month's devouring is meant a speedy and sudden destruction."—*Lowth.*
b "The ancient tenures should be brought to an end by the general captivity of the people, and the desolation of the country."—*Keil.*
c Dr. Thomas.

a "In various parts we saw stakes driven into the ground, and in others large stones placed to divide the fields, instead of hedgerows, of which there were none."—*Gadsby.*
b Dr. Thomas.

a 2 Ki. xv. 19.
b "I will withdraw My presence from them, and will retire from their earthly temple into My heavenly sanctuary; and by making them feel the need of My help in their distress, I will bring them to repentance."—*Targum.*
v. 15. *Dr. J. Cockburn*, 416; *J. Whitty*, 26; *Dr. R. Welton*, 87; *Jon. Edwards*, ii. 830.
c Abp. Leighton.
d J. Campbell.
"Too many have no idea of the subjection of their temper to the influence of religion, and yet what is changed if the temper is not? If a man is

as passionate, malicious, resentful, sullen, moody, or morose, after his conversion as before it, what is he converted from or to?"—*John Angell James.*

morning to the evening of life, poured from vessel to vessel, beaten by wave after wave. These things come to them in great love, whether they consist of poverty or pains, disappointments or family distractions, or anything else; all proceed from a wise and gracious God.[d]—God's checks are symptoms of His mercy; but His silence is the harbinger of judgment. Be circumspect and provident. Hast thou a fair summer? Provide for a hard winter. The world's river ebbs alone, it flows not. He that goes merrily with the stream must bale up. Flatter thyself no longer in thy prosperous sin; but be truly sensible of thy own presumption. Look seriously into thy approaching danger, and humble thyself with contrition. If thou procure sour herbs, God will provide His passover.[e]

[e] *Quarles.*

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—3. (1) come, *etc.*, the language of the humble and penitent. The Prophet indicates what they *will* say. by-and-by. he hath torn, acknowledging judgment to be chastisement from God, and not mere calamity. (2) two days, a fig. for a little while. revive,[a] quicken from the death of calamity. (3) follow on, the sign of thorough earnestness of purpose.[b] prepared, or, as sure as. former .. latter,[c] rain falls in Palestine at two special periods—March and November.

The benefit of following on to know the Lord (*v.* 3).—I. A course of conduct proposed. It implies—1. A previous state of ignorance and estrangement; 2. Reformation begun; 3. Following up these good beginnings. II. The encouragement assumed. This growing form is—1. A certain blessing; 2. A progressive blessing. Learn:—(1) The importance of saving knowledge; (2) Let exertion be encouraged; (3) Let expectation be large; (4) Let there be patient continuance in well-doing.[d]

[a] Ps. lxxi. 20, lxxxv. 6, cxxxviii. 7; Is. lvii. 15.

[b] De. xvi. 20; Ps. xxxiv. 14.

[c] Comp. Ps. lxxii. 6; Pr. xvi. 15; Is. lv. 10.

[d] *v.* 2. *Bp. Sheridan*, i. 172.

v. 3. *B. Hopkins*, 43; *R. Taylor*, ii. 109; *T. Boston*, ix. 384; *Bp. Shipley*, i. 231; *J. C. Lloyd*, 216; *W. Mayers*, 69.

4—7. (4) morning cloud, quickly dispelled by the sunshine. early dew, wh. evaporates with the warmth of the day.[a] (5) hewed, or cut down. thy judgments, *i.e.* the judgments on thee. light, or resistless as the lightning. (6) desired mercy, 1 Sa. xv. 22; Mic. vi. 6—8. (7) like men, or like Adam. there, in the holy Canaan country.

Inconstancy in religion (*v.* 4).—I. Consider the causes of this wretched inconstancy. 1. Men do not consider as they ought the nature of the great change; 2. Are not sufficiently enlightened on the reasons on which they should act; 3. Do not consider the pains they must take and the time they must spend; 4. Are but half resolved; 5. Do not watch against temptation; 6. Neglect the means of grace and duties of religion. II. The certainty that ineffective purposes of amendment will not be accepted instead of true repentance and holiness of life. 1. The Gospel requires these; 2. Transient goodness is not Gospel repentance; 3. No mercy except on Gospel terms. III. What methods we should take if we would not only begin in the ways of religion, but continue to the end. 1. Avoid the errors before mentioned; 2. Meditate on the great truths of religion; 3. Often renew holy resolutions; 4. Bend our chief force against besetting sins; 5. Reflect on the shortness and uncertainty of life. IV. Consider instances of inconstancy in good men. 1. They are

[a] "Bright was the promise of innocent dawn, but the promise was unfulfilled."—*F. Jacox.*

"The Eden stamped upon our hearts in childhood 'chafes and rubs' in our rough struggles with the world, and soon wears away; too often to leave nothing but a mournful blank remaining."—*C. Dickens.*

"We often have heavy dews, and we frequently see them totally dispersed, but their dispersion is gradual; whereas, in the desert,

apt to change as to diligence and activity in the Christian life; 2. Relax vigilance and circumspection; 3. Decline of sensibility of conscience; 4. Stronger worldly affections; 5. A spirit of devotion not maintained.[b]

The two pictures.—A painter, who wanted a picture of Innocence, drew the likeness of a child at prayer. The little suppliant was kneeling by the side of his mother, who regarded him with tenderness. The palms of his lifted hands were reverently pressed together; his rosy cheek spoke of health, and his mild blue eye was upturned with an expression of devotion and peace. This portrait of young Rupert was highly prized by the painter, for he had bestowed on it great pains: he hung it up in his study, and called it *Innocence*. Years rolled along, and the painter became an aged man; but the picture of Innocence still adorned his study wall. Often had he thought of painting a contrast to his favourite portrait, but opportunity had not served. He had sought for a striking model of *Guilt*, but had failed to find one. At last he effected his purpose by paying a visit to a neighbouring gaol. On the damp floor of his dungeon lay a wretched culprit, named Randal, heavily ironed. Wasted was his body, worn was his cheek, and anguish unutterable was seen in his hollow eye. But this was not all: vice was visible in his face, guilt was branded, as with a hot iron, on his brow, and horrid imprecations burst from his blaspheming tongue. The painter executed his task to the life, and bore away the successful effort of his pencil. The portraits of young Rupert and old Randal were hung side by side in his study—the one representing Innocence, the other Guilt. But who was young Rupert, that kneeled in prayer by the side of his mother in meek devotion? And who was old Randal, that lay manacled on the dungeon-floor, cursing and blaspheming? Alas! the two were one. Young Rupert and old Randal were the same. Led by self-will and passion into the paths of sin, no wonder that young Rupert found bitterness and sorrow. That brow, which in childhood was bright with peace and joy, in after years became darkened by guilt and shame; and that heart, which was once the abode of happiness, afterwards became the habitation of anguish.

8—11. (8) **Gilead,** prob. ref. to Ramoth-Gilead, chief town of the hilly country beyond Jordan, see ch. xii. 11. It seems to have been peculiarly licentious, and so taken as a representative. **blood,** *lit.* filled with bloody foot tracks, 1 Ki. ii. 5.[a] (9) **by consent,** better as marg., "on the way to Shechem." **lewdness,** or *enormity*. (10) **horrible thing,** "such an apostasy from God as cannot be mentioned without horror." (11) **set an harvest,** "thou hast made thyself ripe for destruction."[b] **returned,** better, "would have averted."[c]

Divine institutions corrupted (*v.* 8).—I. That Divine institutions, especially designed for man's good, are often corrupted by him. II. When corrupted they become the worst of all evils. 1. A corrupted Bible the worst of all books; 2. Or pulpit the worst of all ministries.[d]

Note on "consent" (*v.* 9).—The margin has, instead of "consent," "shoulder." The Hindoos for the same thing say, "with one hand." Thus, those people with "one hand" have gone to the judge, *i.e.* with one consent. "Those wretches with one hand are doing evil." "If the coolies do their duty with one

the sun no sooner shows his face than the dews disappear, drawn up like smoke."—*Bib. Things.*

v. 4. *J. Saurin*, v. 229; *T. Boston*, iii. 13; *R. Warnford*, i. 55; *W. Sellon*, 361; *J. Parsons*, 235.

b H. Grove (1740).

"'Early dew.'—'What is this prosperity? what this pleasure? Ah! what are my riches, and what my glory? Alas! 'tis like the dew, which flies off at the sight of the morning sun.' 'My son, my son, be not too confident; for life is like the dew.'"—*Roberts.*

"Instability of temper ought to be checked when it disposes men to wander from one scheme to another; since such a fickleness cannot but be attended with fatal consequences."—*Addison.*

a Comp. **2 Ki.** xv. 25; this may be the historical incident referred to.

b Lowth.

c The Heb. language has no potential mood; this is supplied by the tenses of the indicative.

d Dr. Thomas.

Those who are surly and imperious to their inferiors, are generally humble, flattering, and cringing to their superiors."—*Fuller.*

Roberts.

hand. the work will soon be finished." "Why have they not accomplished their object? because they did not go about it with one hand."[c]

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1—3. (1) **healed Israel**, *i.e.* restored the prosperity of the nation. **Ephraim**, the chief of the ten tribes composing the northern nation. **Samaria**, the capital and royal city.[a] **falsehood**, *comp.* ch. iv. 2.[b] **thief . . robbers**, indicating the prevalence of sins of violence. **spoileth**, or *strippeth*, alluding to highway robbers. Neither the roads nor the towns were safe. (2) **remember**, observe and keep count, so as in due time to punish. **beset them**, gathering round them like so many witnesses against them. (3) **king glad**, instead of sorry, as he should be.

Man's sins in God's mind (*v.* 2).—Three things here invite our attention. I. A fact in the Divine providence or government: "I remember all their wickedness." II. Forgetfulness on the part of those who ought to remember it. III. God's complaint of such forgetfulness.[c]

4—7. (4) **as an oven**, a fig. of heated passion.[a] **ceaseth**, *etc.*, when he knows that it is well heated, he ceases from stirring it till the dough is leavened.[b] (5) **day**, either birthday or inauguration day. **sick**, surfeited, drunken. **stretched . . scorners**, *i.e.* encouraged loose and worthless people at his court. (6) **lie in wait**, as the baker waits when his oven is hot and ready, so these bad men wait to destroy the king when their plans are fully made. **burneth**, stirred up, it then flames forth into action. Circumstances then seemed all ready for the perpetration of the crime. (7) **kings are fallen**, *comp.* 2 Ki. xv.

Ephraim.—Ephraim may be understood to represent the individual Christian, and in the New Testament sense Israel is the spiritual Israel, the kingdom of God, the Church of Christ. To "speak trembling," that is, to manifest in words or in manner humility and dejection, might seem to men anything but indicative of an attainment to a high position. And we know that in the affairs of every-day life hesitancy or timidity are ruinous to our success. But in the presence of God we must "speak trembling;" for it is to the self-abased that it is given to possess the Divine favour, and to rank high amongst God's Israel, by doing, or, it may be, only by enduring. The trembler acquires vigour for the discharge of Christian duty, in a way which surprises the world, and the Church also. Macaulay, in one of his graphic portraitures of Puritan life, shows that it was just because the Ironsides lay in the deepest humiliation before God's throne, and shook with emotion while they besought His blessing, that they were enabled to move forth valorous and unalarmed against the plumed and jubilant hosts of cavaliers. Perhaps it is because we have ceased, to some extent, to speak as tremblingly before God as it becomes us to do, that amongst us Christians there has arisen so great an awe of public opinion, or the private censure or sneer.

8—10. (8) **not turned**, and therefore burned to ashes on

a "The gleam of prosperity wh. Jehovah had accorded His people had only been attended by growing corruption, which, under the princes and usurpers that succeeded (Jeroboam II.) burst forth into the most frightful disorders."—*Spk. Com.*
b Is. lix. 3, 13.
c S. Martin.

a "The expression may be metaphorical, implying that they were apostates from God, to whose service they were engaged by the most solemn bond and covenant."—*Lowth.*
Comp. Je. ix. 2; Mat. xiv. 4; Ja. iv. 4.

b "Satan kindles for himself the fire of literal and spiritual adultery in the heart of men, and leaves it there to burn till the dough be leavened, and, so to speak, the sin is made ready to be kneaded, and to be made into bread."—*Wordsworth.*
"An unclean heart is like an oven heated; and the unclean lusts and affections of it are as the fuel that makes it hot."—*Mat. Henry.*

"The simplest

one side, and useless.[a] (9) strangers, *etc.*, for historical truth of this statement see 2 Ki. xiii. 7, xv. 19, 20, 29. grey hairs, *etc.*,[b] "expressive of a reckless people's unconscious decline, whose lapses were taken account of on high."[c] (10) pride, *etc.*, ch. v. 5.

Spiritual declension (*v.* 9).—I. The condition here deplored. II. The causes in which it originated. III. The prevention and cure.—*Forgetfulness of God* (*v.* 10).—I. The duty. It is to seek God. 1. Because with Him we have principally to do; 2. We are to seek to enjoy Him; 3. To obey Him; 4. To resemble Him. II. The neglect of this duty. Of neglecters there are—1. Infidels; 2. The careless; 3. The profligate; 4. The moralist; 5. Backsliders and apostates. III. The aggravation of all this neglect. 1. God's benefits to draw; 2. The Bible to instruct; 3. The preaching of the Gospel; 4. The power of conscience; 5. The various associations in life; 6. Public judgments. Appeal—(1) On the ground of gratitude; (2) Danger.[d]

Marshal de Bassomptre.—The Marshal de Bassomptre said to one of his officers, "How old are you?" "I cannot tell exactly," said the captain; "but I am either thirty-eight or forty-eight." "How is it," asked the marshal, "that you are so ignorant in a concern that every person finds pleasure in knowing?" "Why," said the captain, "I keep an exact account of my rents, and what is owing to me, for fear of being cheated; but I never trouble my head about my years, because nobody can rob me of them." Poor man! did he not know that he was robbed of his precious time every day and every hour? It is gone, too, beyond recovery. If a thief steals our money, it is possible we may get it again; but time that is past never returns; life that is wasted is gone for ever. Learn, then, to turn to account every passing hour.[e]

11, 12. (11) silly dove, an Arab prov. says, "There is nothing more simple than a dove." without heart, or understanding; ability to manage for itself so as to preserve itself from evil. Egypt, *etc.*, by turns Israel sought the aid of these rival nations, and so secured its own ruin.[a] (12) net, the symbol of ruin. as the fowls, or as the fowler does the birds. hath heard, in the Pentateuch,[b] and from the Prophets.[c]

The silliness of sin (*v.* 11).—I. It is too silly to defend its own. II. It is too silly to feel its loss. III. It is too silly to escape danger. Apply:—Sin is a folly. The fool and sinner are, in God's vocabulary, convertible terms.[d]

13–16. (13) woe, *etc.*, as Is. iii. 9; Je. xiii. 27. redeemed them, out of Egyptian bondage, etc. lies, *see* Ro. i. 25.[a] (14) cried, *comp.* Jer. iii. 9, 15, vi. 6, 7. howled,[b] prob. referring to their time of calamity, and the wild forms of idolatrous worship. for corn, *i.e.* to cry and pray for it in famine time. (15) bound, or instructed them.[c] The fig. is that of a surgeon's binding to strengthen the sinews. (16) deceitful bow, or a slack bow; see Ps. lxxviii. 57. "An ill-contrived bow, which never directs the arrow to the mark." rage, *etc.*, Ps. lxxiii. 9.

Bowstrings (*v.* 16).—The strings of African bows are all made of the entrails of animals, a kind of catgut. Moist weather renders it so soft that they cannot shoot with it; form of the oven is that of a hole dug in the earth; the sides being coated with clay, and the bottom laid with pebbles. The bread is placed against the sides, and is soon prepared. A rougher way still was to kindle a fire and let it burn fiercely, then to clear away the embers and lay the cakes on the heated spot, covering them up again with the hot ashes which had just been removed."—*Bib. Things.*

b Compare Arab prov., "Thy grey hairs are the publishers of thy death."

c F. Jacox.

d W. Jay.

e R. T. S.

a "No doubt it was a policy constantly in the minds of Hebrew statesmen in both kingdoms, how they might secure themselves against either one of these two empires by calling in the assistance of the other."—*Spk. Com.*

b Le. xxvi. 14—39; De. xxviii. 15—68.

c 2 Ki. xvii. 13, 14.

d Dr. Thomas.

a "Pretending to be My worshippers when they all the while worshipped idols; also defrauding Me of the glory of their deliverance, and ascribing it and their other blessings to idols."—*Calvin.*

b "When they were bemoaning

their calamities, as sick men bewail themselves upon a bed of sickness." — *Lowth.*

c Maurer.

"Whether I chastised them, or strengthened their arms, they imagined mischief against Me."—*Grotius.*

v. 16. *B. Beddome*, vii. 140.

d Campbell.

"Not power I blame, but power obtained by crime: angelic greatness is angelic virtue. Amidst the glare of courts, the shout of armies, will not the apostate feel the pangs of guilt, and wish too late for innocence and peace? curst as the tyrant of the infernal realms with gloomy state, and agonising pomp." —*Johnson.*

"The canon law defines apostasy to be a wilful departure from that state of faith which any person has professed himself to hold in the Christian Church."—*J Farrar.*

"O lust, thou infernal fire! whose fuel is gluttony; whose flame is pride; whose sparkles are wanton words; whose smoke is infamy; whose ashes are uncleanness; whose end is hell."—*Quarles.*

e Cheever.

should they try it, the string would either instantly break, or it would stretch to such a length that it could not impel the arrow. In consequence of this being the case, I have heard the remark made in Africa that the safest time to travel among the wild bushmen is in wet weather, for then they cannot shoot you. Were people using such bows for defence, and unacquainted with this effect of moisture, in a time of danger to seize their bow for self-defence, they would be grievously deceived, by finding them useless when most needed. They would thus prove deceitful bows.[d]—*Apostasy of Bricconet.*—When those who stand in a commanding position at a time when society is agitated by a great moral struggle, fail to do and suffer what duty requires, their influence, even after death, is often signally mischievous. A noted and pertinent example is that of Bricconet, Bishop of Meaux in France, in the sixteenth century. Catching the spirit of reform at that time pervading Germany and Switzerland, he zealously opposed some grosser errors and views of the Romish Church. Having been twice ambassador to Rome—a bishop, a noble—an intimate friend of the reigning and preceding monarch, he was looked upon as one of the great pillars of the Reformation. A change of government comes, the Inquisition is set up, and Bricconet becomes the first object of their vengeance. "The poor bishop," says D'Aubigné, "who had been so sanguine in the hope to see the Reformation gradually and silently winning its way in men's minds, trembled in dismay when he found at the eleventh hour that it must be purchased by life itself. No alternatives were presented him but death or recantation, and to the latter the minions of the Pope urged him by the most plausible pretexts. They pretended they too were anxious for a Reformation, that all was going on by insensible steps, that many would be won over by his conceding and yielding a little, who would be stumbled by his warm and open opposition to the Church. Bricconet heard, considered, his resolution was shaken; he staggered under the cross—he stumbled—he fell! The day of his recantation was a dark day for France. The great conflict then waging in that country between truth and error was sadly affected by the bishop's fall." "What his enemies represented as the saving of his country," says the historian, "was perhaps the worst of its misfortunes. What might not have been the consequence if Bricconet had possessed the courage of Luther? If one of the most eminent of the French bishops had ascended the scaffold, and there, like the poor of this world, sealed by martyrdom the truth of the Gospel, would not France herself have been put upon reflection? Would not the blood of the Bishop of Meaux have served, like the blood of Polycarp and Cyprian, as the seed of the Church? And should we not have seen these provinces emancipating themselves in the sixteenth century from the darkness in which they are still enveloped? The mournful fall of Bricconet was felt as a shock to the hearts of his former friends, and was the sad forerunner of those deplorable apostasies to which the friendship of the world so often led in another age of French history."[e]

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—4. (1) **thy mouth**, *lit.* thy palate. This is to give notice of the approaching judgment. **as an eagle**,[a] swiftly and fiercely. "The vulture is distinguished both for rapidity of flight and for the far-off perception of its prey." (2) **cry**, *etc.*, their language right enough, their hearts and their actions far from right. (3) **good**, *i.e.* the service of God, which alone is true *good*.[b] (4) **made idols**, abusing their wealth to idolatry. **cut off**, rushing thus upon their own destruction.

The characteristics of the hypocrite (*vv.* 2, 3).—I. The confidence which they often possess. II. The notice which God takes of their hypocrisy. III. The awful danger which awaits them. Apply:—1. Examine well the grounds of our confidence; 2. Endeavour to maintain a close walk with God.

5—7. (5) **thy calf**, the idolatry of Israel began with Jeroboam's calves.[a] **innocency**, or *guiltlessness*.[b] (6) **from Israel**, *i.e.* he himself made the idol which he calls his God. **workman made it**, a frequent scornful expression of the Prophets. **broken in pieces**, *lit.* "for chips for firing." (7) **sown**, *etc.*, a proverbial expression to signify that as men's works are, so must their reward be. **it . . stalk**, *i.e.* no standing corn; the harvest fails. **bud**, or flower. **strangers**, foreign enemies, who shall reap Israel's harvests.

Idolatry (*vv.* 5—7).—These verses present to us idolatry in five aspects. 1. As abhorrent to Jehovah; 2. As antagonistic to moral purity; 3. As an outrage on reason; 4. As doomed to destruction; 5. As productive of great evil.[c]

Female training.—When I see thousands of households in which young girls are reared for a life of pleasure, without reference to duty, I cannot wonder at these results, nor at the misery in which they involve families and communities. Sow the wind and reap the whirlwind!

8—10. (8) **swallowed up**,[a] it was Israel's fate to be so absorbed by other nations as never again to have a separate national existence. **vessel . . pleasure**, Je. xlviii. 38. (9) **wild ass**,[b] lonely and wilful, forcing its own way, and swayed only by passion. (10) **hired**, *i.e.* paid for foreign allies and helpers. **gather them**, against those who paid them hire. **sorrow a little**,[c] or within a little while. **burden**, of calamity and woe coming on them from the very king they hired.

Note on v. 9.—I believe this refers to an earthen vessel, and not to one made of skin. People often compare each other to an *uppu-panum*, *i.e.*, literally, a salt-vessel, because, after it has contained salt it is most fragile, the least thing will break it to pieces. "What are you, sir?" "An *uppu-panum*," a salt-vessel. "Look at that poor salt-vessel; if you touch him he will fall to pieces."[d]

11—14. (11) **to him to sin**, *i.e.* to him as a ground of punishment. The many altars were the plain and open proof of his idolatry. (12) **written**, so that all might know them. De. iv. 6, 8. (13) **flesh**, mere flesh. They do not put their hearts into their sacrifices. **to Egypt**, not literally. Going into

a Heb. *nesher*, the griffon vulture.

b Ps. cxix. 68.

v. 2. *B. Beddome*, iii. 159.

v. 3. *Dr. W. Webster*, 75.

a "Jeroboam, during his sojourn in Egypt, saw Apis worshipped at Memphis, and Mnevis at Heliopolis, in the form of an ox; this, and the temple-cherubim, suggested the idea of the calves set up at Dan and Bethel." —*Fausset.*

b "That pure form of religious life wh. Jehovah had prescribed in His law, free from all idolatrous admixtures and precepts of men." —*Spk. Com.*

c *Dr. Thomas.*

a Ps. cxxiv. 3; Pr. i. 12; Je. li. 34.

b Job xxxix. 5; Je. ii. 24.

c Heb. *menat*, meaning here *in a little time.*

d *Roberts.*

a "Judah, though less idolatrous than Israel, betrayed want of faith in Jehovah by trusting more

to its fenced cities than to Him."—*Faussct.*

v. 12. *S. Knight*, ii. 412; *W. Jay*, iii. 78.

"'Care not' would have it."—*English.* "I don't want it; I don't want it: but drop it into my hood."—*Spanish Friar.* "He who finds fault would feign buy. Under white ashes there is a glowing coal."—*Italian.* "'Sour grapes,' said the fox, when he could not reach them."—*English.*

b Whitecross.

Egypt was a proverbial speech for extreme misery. (14) fire, the frequent image of God's judgments.[a]

The Divine letter neglected by man (*v.* 12).—I. God has written to man. II. The great things in the law are the things on which God has written to man. They are great—1. In the matters to which they refer; 2. In the manner in which they are addressed to us; 3. In the influence which they are fitted to exert over us; 4. In the results with which they are followed both here and hereafter. III. Men often count the great things of His law, on which God has written to them, as a strange thing. They think them unauthoritative, unintelligible, unsuitable, or uninfluential.

The neglected Word.—A certain preacher in the West of England, remarkable for his opposition to the moral law as a rule of life to believers, was preaching on a week-day evening at a village, in a cottage full of poor people; when, declaiming in his usual way against the law, and seemingly at a loss for expressions sufficient to degrade it, he said, "The law is dead; it is fallen; it is done with." Having just then occasion to use his handkerchief, he spread it out, and holding a corner in each hand said, "The law, my friends, has fallen down before the believer like this handkerchief;" then letting it go from his hands, it unfortunately fell on the candles and extinguished them, leaving the preacher and all his hearers in darkness; a very just, though accidental, representation of that mental and practical darkness which such preaching is likely to produce.[b]

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—4. (1) rejoice not, addressed to the people prob. at harvest thanksgiving-time. loved a reward, lit. *harlot's hire.*[a] (2) winepress, or vat into wh. the juice of the grape was pressed. fail in her, *i.e.* disappoint her expectations. (3) dwell, or permanently abide. to Egypt, *comp.* ch. viii. 13. unclean things, such as meat wh. had been offered to idols. (4) not offer, *etc.*, lit. *pour as a libation.*[b] bread of mourners, wh. was regarded as unclean.[c] bread . . soul, *i.e.* their offering for the expiation of their soul.[d]

Moral suicide.—A gentleman of renown was on his dying bed, when a friend, near at hand, spoke of the Saviour. "As to the Bible," he replied, "it may be true; I do not know." "What, then, are your prospects?" he was asked. He replied in whispers, "Very dark, very dark." "But have you no light from the Sun of Righteousness? Have you done justice to the Bible?" "Perhaps not," he replied, "but it is now too late—too late."—A mother, who had laughed at religion and religious people, was seen restless and miserable on her bed of death. She desired that her children should be called—they came. In broken accents she addressed them: "My children, I have been leading you in the wrong road all your life; I now find the broad road ends in destruction; I did not believe it before. Oh! seek to serve God, and try to find the gate to heaven, though you may never meet your mother there." Her lips were closed for ever, and her spirit departed to its account, while the household looked on terror-struck.

a Je. xliv. 17.
b Ex. xxx. 9; Le. xxiii. 13.
c De. xxvi. 14; Je. xvi. 7; Ex. xxiv. 17.
d Calvin.

"Or, their bread is for their own soul, for their own self-indulgence, not for God's glory."—*Wordsworth.*

"Oh, the extreme loathsomeness of fleshly lust! which not only effeminates the mind, but enervates the body; which not only distaineth the soul, but disguiseth the person! It is ushered with fury and wantonness; it is accompanied with filthiness and uncleanness; and it is followed with grief and repentance."—*Quarles.*

5—7. (5) will ye do, in your captivity, when the times of the solemn and joyous festivals come round, and you find that you cannot keep them in the stranger's land. (6) destruction, from the devastation. Memphis, Heb. *Moph;* the capital of lower Egypt.[a] bury them, together with its idol cats, and birds, and bulls: a strange disgrace for the covenant people. pleasant . . silver, or "whatever precious things they have of silver." nettles, or thistles, the sign of desolation. (7) days, *etc.*, the times of Divine judgment. a fool, this is one of the signs of judgment, a judicial blindness is on the national leaders.

The solemn days of life (*v.* 5).—I. The day of personal affliction is a solemn day. II. The day of social bereavement. III. The day of death. IV. The day of judgment. Apply:—1. What will ye do in that day? 2. Why, what you should do every day.

8—10. (8) watchman, or true prophet. prophet, or false prophet, who is only a snare, and a deceiver. hatred in, *i.e.* against. Or, is a cause of apostasy. (9) Gibeah, Ju. xix. 16—22. (10) like grapes, wh. the traveller in a wilderness is delighted to find and quench his thirst with. firstripe . . fig, esteemed a great delicacy in the E. Baal-peor, Nu. xxv. 3. shame, *Besheth*, a nickname for Baal.[a]

The iniquity of Gibeah (*v.* 9).—The case of Gibeah—1. Presents a general warning in reference to the corruption of public morals; 2. Shows that a corrupt state of morals is adapted to produce the most flagrant crimes; 3. Furnishes a forcible illustration of the danger of giving any manner of countenance to iniquity; 4. Warns us of the sure consequences of iniquity.[b]

Grapes in the wilderness.—The Lord is telling of His gladness in finding these lost sheep, His delight in taking them up when they were wayward, sinful, wandering souls. It gave Him great joy to save them. It was as refreshing to Him as is a cluster of grapes to a traveller in the weary wilderness, whose lips are parched, and whose eyes have long rested on barrenness, and who hails with satisfaction and delight the sight of a vine and its juicy grapes. Dr. Livingstone gives an instance of this feeling: "In latitude 18° we were rewarded with a sight which we had not enjoyed for a year before—large patches of grape-bearing vines. There they stood before my eyes." The traveller thus gives utterance to his delight: "The sight was so entirely unexpected, that I stood for some time gazing at the clusters of grapes with which they were loaded, with no more thought of plucking, than if I had been beholding them in a dream."

11—16. (11) like a bird, or a flock of birds. (12) bereave them, *comp.* De. xxxii. 25. man left, better, "that mankind shall not be." An entire riddance shall be made of them and their posterity. depart from them, withdrawing My protection and favour.[a] (13) Tyrus, or Tyre, Ez. xxvii. 3. (14) give them, in severe Divine judgment. (15) Gilgal, the principal focus of idolatrous worship. mine house, or land, or dwelling-place. princes . . revolters, in Heb. a play on words: their *Sarim* are *Sorerim*. (16) smitten, with blight. (17) wanderers, having no more a settled and permanent home.[b]

Church membership of children.—What, then, is this infant membership? What conception can we take of it which will justify its Christian dignity? A great many persons who are

a "It is curious that this city should be spoken of by Hosea as a burying-place; but travellers tell us that throughout the whole district, monuments and ruins of a great city have been, and still are being, constantly found buried in the sand; whilst the rear forms one unbroken cemetery, pyramids, tombs, and mummy pits; so that this vast receptacle for the dead separated the desert from the great city and the cultivated lands."—*Bib. Things.*

a Comp. Jerubbaal, called Jerubbesheth, 2 Sa. xi. 21.

v. 8. *J. Cawood*, i. 406.

b J. Hall.

"In Barbary, and no doubt in the hotter climate of Judæa, after mild winters, some of the more forward trees will now and then yield a few ripe figs, six weeks or more before the full season. Such is probably the allusion in this place."—*Shaw.*

a "This terrible threat, or rather, perhaps, prediction, of extermination, addressed to the Ten Tribes in general, but applying most esp. to Ephraim, the most populous of them all, serves to explain the fact that there are so few traces left in the world of their

continued existence."—*Spk. Com.*

b 2 Ki. xv. 29; 1 Chr. v. 26.

"Dr. Johnson was exceedingly disposed to the general indulgence of children, and was even scrupulously and ceremoniously attentive not to offend them. He was, however, full of indignation against such parents as delight to produce their young ones too early into the talking world, and was known to give a good deal of pain by refusing to hear the verses that children could recite, or the songs they could sing; particularly to one friend, who told him that his two sons should repeat Gray's 'Elegy' to him alternately, that he might judge who had the happiest cadence. 'No, pray, sir,' said he, 'let the little dears both speak it at once; more noise will by that means be made, and the noise will be sooner over.'"—*Dr. Johnson.*

Communion with the Father and the Son is that which essentially separates us from everything that would oppose our relations with the Father and the Son.

c *Dr. Bushnell.*

very sharp at this kind of criticism, appear to have never observed that creatures existing under conditions of growth allow no such terms of classification as those do which are dead, and have no growth; such, for example, as stones, metals, and earths. They are certain that gold is not iron, and iron is not silver, and they suppose that they can class the growing and transitional creatures, that are separated by no absolute lines, in the same manner. They talk of colts and horses, lambs and sheep, and it possibly not once occurs to them that they can never tell when the colt becomes a horse, or the lamb a sheep; and that about the most definite thing they can say, when pressed with that question, is that the colt is potentially a horse, the lamb a sheep, even from the first, having in itself this definite futurition; and, therefore, that while horses and sheep are not all to be classed as colts and lambs, all colts and lambs may be classed as horses and sheep. And just so children are all men and women; and if there is the law of futurition in them to justify it, may be fitly classed as believing men and women. And all the sharp arguments that go to cover their membership as such in the Church with absurdity, or to turn it into derision, are just such arguments as the inventors could raise with equal point to ridicule the horsehood and sheephood of the young animals just referred to. The propriety of this membership does not lie in what those infants can or cannot believe, or do or do not believe, at some given time, as, for example, on the day of their baptism; but it lies in the covenant of promise, which makes their parents parents in the Lord, their nurture a nurture of the Lord, and so constitutes a force of futurition by which they are to grow up imperceptibly into "faithfuls among faithfuls," in Christ Jesus. .... The conception, then, of this membership is, that it is potentially a real one; that it stands, for the present, in the faith of the parents and the promise which is to them and to their children, and that on this ground they may well enough be accounted believers, just as they are accounted potentially men and women. Then, as they come forward into maturity, it is to be assumed that they will come forward into faith, being grown in the nurture of faith, and will claim for themselves the membership into which they were before inserted. Nor is this a case which has no analogies that it should be held up as a mark of derision. It is generally supposed that our common law has some basis of common sense. And yet this body of law makes every infant child a citizen; requiring, as a point of public order, the whole constabulary and even military force of the State to come to the rescue or the redress of his wrongs, when his person is seized or property invaded by conspiracy. This infant child can sue or be sued; for the Court of Chancery will appoint him a guardian, whose acts shall be the child's acts: and it shall be as if he were answering for his own education, dress, board, entertainments, and the damages done by his servants, precisely as if he were a man acting in his own cause. Doubtless it may sound very absurdly to call him a citizen. What can he do as a citizen? He cannot vote or bear arms; he does not even know what these things mean, and yet he is a citizen. In one view he votes, bears arms, legislates, even in his cradle; for the potentiality is in him, and the State takes him up in her arms, as it were, to own him as her citizen.c

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1—4. (1) **empty vine**, one bearing no fruit. But the Heb. term rather suggests emptying itself, spending itself, in growth and fruitage, but all unto idols. not unto God. **goodness .. images**, ch. ii. 8, viii. 4. (2) **divided**, between Jehovah and idols.[a] **now**, or speedily. (3) **no king**, reference is to an interregnum, a time of anarchy.[b] (4) **hemlock**, De. xxix. 18.[c]

The abuse of worldly prosperity (*v.* 1).—I. A fruitlessness that makes life worthless. II. A fruitfulness that makes life wicked. 1. When prosperity is used with an exclusive regard to our own selfish ends: 2. For self-indulgence; 3. For self-aggrandisement. III. When it is used without a supreme regard to the claims of God. 1. For the amelioration of human woes: 2. For the dispersion of human ignorance; 3. For the elevation of the human soul. Apply:—(1) How are we, as a nation, using our enormous prosperity? (2) How as individuals?[d]

5, 6. (5) **Beth-aven**, *i.e. Beth-el.* the house of God, wh. has become *Beth-aven*, the house of vanity, or idols. "The whole *v.* is instinct with mocking exultation over the fall of Israel's idolatry." **priests**, Heb. *chemarim*, prob. idolatrous priests.[a] (6) **king Jareb**, ch. v. 13.

Social sins and their results (*v.* 4).—I. There are three social sins referred to in this text. 1. Vain speech; 2. False swearing; 3. Unrighteous treaties. II. The results of them are also indicated. 1. They come as a growth; 2. They come as poison; 3. They come abundantly.[b]

7, 8. (7) **as the foam**, of a wave, stripped off by the wind; a strongly contemptuous figure.[a] (8) **Aven**, vanity, iniquity, here for the *calf idol.* **cover us**, seeking death as a relief from their misery and shame.[b]

Sea foam (*v.* 7).—"Those sons of fiends are now gone as the *ncer-molle*," *i.e.* the bubble. "Alas! my race is cut off: it has disappeared like the bubble." "Yes, those people were only bubbles; they have all gone."[c]—*The thorn on the altar.*—Has a man by fraud gained possession of another person's land, then the imprecation is uttered. "Thorns and thistles shall ever grow there!" "He get rice from his land! Never! he will have thorns and thistles." "Yes, yes, the rice shall be as thorns in his bowels."[d]

9—11. (9) **days of Gibeah**, *comp.* ch. ix. 9. **bind .. furrows**, or in their two sins, *i.e.* their twofold apostasy: in the two calves. at Dan and Beth-el. The fig. is taken from the heifer. see the foll. verse. **tread the corn**, of wh. she may feed at her pleasure. **passed .. neck**, to put her under the yoke, and bring her into subjection to her enemies. **Ephraim to ride**, better. the Assyrian to ride upon Ephraim. **plow**, hard, toilsome work. (12) **sow to yourselves**, employ yourselves in works wh. will bring good fruitage. **break .. ground**, *i.e.* remove your superstitions and your vices. Or, "Plough for yourselves fresh soil."[a] **rain righteousness**, Ps. lxxii. 6; Is. xlv. 8. (13) **plowed wickédness**, Job iv. 8. (14) **Shalman**, *etc.*, 2 Ki. xviii. 34, xix. 13.[b] (15) **great wickedness**, "the

a 1 Ki. xviii. 21; Mat. vi. 24; Ja. iv. 8.
b Between the murder of Pekah and the settlement of Hoshea on the throne, a period of eight or nine years.
c "Instead of justice and fair dealing, injustice increases everywhere, as bitter and poisonous weeds grow up in a field, where there is no care taken to destroy them."—*Lowth.*
d Dr. Thomas.
a Comp. 2 Ki. xxiii. 5; Zeph. i. 4.
"The word is taken fr. a root meaning either the *black garment* in wh. they were attired; or to *resound*, referring to their howling cries in their sacred rites."—*Calvin.*
b Dr. Thomas.
a "Critics are almost equally divided between the renderings 'foam,' 'bubble,' and 'chip;' the king being, in the latter case, compared to a chip floating away with the stream and lost."—*Spk. Com.*
b Lu. xxiii. 30; Re. vi. 16, ix. 6.
c Roberts.
d Ibid.
a "Be not content with what ye have cultivated, but bring new ground into cultivation. Grow in grace; forget what is behind; reach forward to what is before; add to your faith virtue, and every Christian grace; and do you, who have

been brought to God, bring others to Him."—*Wordsworth.*

b "Arbela was among the towns which joined Assur-day-anpal, the son of Shalmaneser, in his revolt against his father, toward the end of the latter's reign; and its capture and sack seems to have made a great impression. As Arbela was chiefly noted for its great temple of the goddess *Istar*, or Ashtoreth, it is possible that the expression used by the Prophet—Beth-Arbel, or Temple of Arbel—has special reference to the destruction of the temple in question."—*Lenormant.*

c W. W. Whythe.

d Roberts.

a "Or, From the time that he (Israel) was in Egypt, I called him My son."—*Bengel.*

Ex. iv. 22, 23; Mat. ii. 15. "St. Mat. apparently quotes these words, not to prove anything, but in order to point out the relation of God's former dealings with the latter, the beginning and the close, what relates to the body, and what relates to the head."—*Pasey.*

b "Or, images of Baal set up in different places."—*Fausset.*

Ho. ii. 13, xiii. 1.

c "As a mother doth teach her child to go, lead-

phrase seems to come fresh from the mint of Hosea's own indignant feeling."

The culture of the heart (*v.* 12).—I. The figure employed. 1. Naturally unproductive; 2. Obdurate; 3. Fruitful in weeds. II. The means to be used. 1. Consideration; 2. Repentance. III. The reason assigned. 1. Indecision is inconsistent; 2. It is presumptuous to defer; 3. It is dangerous; 4. Now is God's time.*c*

Showers of blessing (*v.* 12).—It is said of a good king, "What a blessing is he to the land; he is always raining justice upon us." "You talk to me about the merit of remaining with such a master: he is always raining blessings upon him." A son after the decease of his father, asks, "Where is now the rain of love? alas! I am withered and dry." The figure is also used sarcastically, "Yes, indeed, you are a very good friend, you are always raining favours upon me."*d*

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1—4. (1) child, or but a nation in its infant beginnings. Referring to patriarchal times. called . . Egypt,*a* intended to recall the greatness of their deliverance. (2) as they called, *i.e.* prophets, etc., sent by God. went from them, turned away, avoiding these advisers. Baalim, a plural word, indicating the various forms under which Baal was worshipped.*b* (3) to go, *i.e.* to walk, to go alone; to use his feet.*c* De. i. 31. I healed them, or purposed correction and training by My dealings with them. (4) drew them, Song Sol. i. 4.*d* cords . . man, with the persuasions a man might use with his fellow man. yoke, *etc.*, when yokes galled the neck they were lifted forward toward the jaws.

God's goodness to His people (*v.* 4).—I. Glance at the manner in which this attraction is accomplished. 1. With the cords of a man, that is, rationally; 2. With bands of love, that is, affectionately. II. The provision made for the relief and supply of His people: "I laid meat unto them." III. The goodness of God is always complete, hence He also takes away the yoke—1. Of Judaism; 2. Of popery; 3. Of persecution; 4. Of bigotry; 5. Of legality; 6. Of ignorance.*e*

Graven images (*v.* 2).—We read frequently of graven images and of molten images, and the words are become so familiar, as names of idolatrous images, that although they are not well chosen to express the Hebrew names, it seems not advisable to change them for others, that might more exactly correspond with the original. The graven image was not a thing wrought in metal by the tool of the workman we should now call an engraver; nor was the molten image an image made of metal, or any other substance melted and shaped in a mould. In fact, the graven image and the molten image are the same thing, under different names. The images of the ancient idolaters were first cut out of wood by the carpenter, as is very evident from the Prophet Isaiah. This figure of wood was overlaid with plates either of gold or silver, or sometimes perhaps of an inferior metal; and in this finished state it was called a graven image (*i.e.* a carved image) in reference to the inner solid figure of wood,

and a molten (*i.e.* an overlaid, or covered) image in reference to the outer metalline case or covering. Sometimes both epithets are applied to it at once. "I will cut off the graven and molten image" (Nahum i. 14). Again, "What profiteth the graven and molten image?" (Hab. ii. 18). The English word molten conveys a notion of melting, or fusion. But this is not the case with the Hebrew word for which it is given. The Hebrew signifies, generally, to overspread, or cover all over, in whatever manner, according to the different subject, the overspreading or covering be effected; whether by pouring forth a substance in fusion, or by spreading a cloth over or before, or by hammering on metalline plates. It is on account of this metalline case that we find a founder employed to make a graven image (Judges xvii. 3): and that we read in Is. xl. 19. of a workman that melteth a graven image; and in another place (chap. xliv.) we find the question, "Who hath molten a graven image?" In these two passages the words should be overlayeth, and overlaid.[f]

ing it by the arms, protecting him, and providing for him in the wilderness."—*Lowth.*

d Jno. xii. 32.

e W. Jay.

Ignorance makes some men bold, and others timid.

f Horsley.

5—7. (5) **not return**, *literally.*[a] Previously the Prophet had spoken of such return *mystically* (ch. viii. 13. ix. 3). **refused to return**, in penitence to Jehovah. (6) **abide**, lit. *light upon*, or *whirl down on.* **branches**, lit. *bars*, or defenders: perhaps *villages.*[b] **own counsels**, seeking idols, and thinking to rely on Egypt. (7) **bent**, fully inclined and purposed.[c]

Backsliding Israel (*vv.* 7—9).—We have—I. A certain course described. 1. What it proves; 2. What it involves: folly the most extreme, ingratitude the most base. II. A certain feeling indicated. 1. Its nature; 2. Its causes. III. A certain resolution formed. This should excite—1. Our gratitude; 2. Kindle our astonishment; 3. Subdue our opposition; 4. Dissipate our fears.

a "This is one of the most pathetic passages in all Scripture, and is accordingly marked with the parallelism wh. is so characteristic of poetry in Hebrew in a much higher degree than is usual with Hosea." — *Spk. Com.*

b "I am not one such as human dwellers in a city, who take cruel vengeance; I save those whom I correct." —*S. Jerome.*

"I will not come in wrath." — *Maurer.*

c J. A. Morris.

8, 9. (8) **how**, *etc.*,[a] the expression of strong reluctance and deep pain. **deliver thee**, up to thine enemies. **Admah? .. Zeboim?** Ge. xix. 24; De. xxix. 23. **heart**, *etc.*, comp. Is. lxiii. 15; Je. xxxi. 20. (9) **fierceness**, *etc.*, God will not act as a man in uncontrolled rage, but with Divine wisdom and goodness order penalty so that it may prove *corrective.* **enter .. city**, better, *come in wrath.*[b]

God's feeling in the face of man's obstinacy (*vv.* 8. 9).—Three things suggested. I. That man is able to resist God in the dispensation of His mercy. The idea that we are governed by some Divine fate arises—1. From unacquaintance with the nature of the human will; 2. Unacquaintance with God's moral government; 3. Misinterpretation of some particular portions of God's Word. II. That man's resistance renders it necessary on God's part to give him up. 1. The most applicable means is insufficient for recovering him; 2. The only means is insufficient for recovering him. III. That there is an infinite, compassionate reluctance on God's part to give up man. 1. The relation that exists between God and man renders Him reluctant to give him up; 2. God's knowledge of man renders Him reluctant to give him up; 3. God's dealings with man prove that He is infinite in mercy, reluctant to give him up.[c]

a Joel iii. 16; Am. i. 8; Re. x. 3.

b The chapter

10—12. (10) **shall walk**, by-and-by, in the days of restoration after chastisement. **roar**,[a] an image intimating a voice heard afar. There is prob. reference to the loud voice of the

should end here. "With this v. the prophesying has reached the goal to which, in conformity with ch. iii. 5, it should properly have been brought."—*Ewald.*

c Reference is to the times of Hezekiah.

d "Perhaps the v. should be translated, 'Even Judah is unruly towards God, and towards the Holy One, who is faithful."—*Wordsworth.*

e Dr. Thomas.

terrible judgments brought on Israel's foes. tremble, with anxious expectation. (11) tremble as a bird, or fly hastily as a flock of birds. place . . houses, *comp.* habits of migratory birds. wh. return year by year to the same spot.[b] (12) Ephraim, here standing for the northern nation. Judah, the kingdom of the two tribes. wh. yet remained in measure faithful to Jehovah.[c] saints, lit. *Holy Ones,* prob. a designation of God.[d]

The Divine voice to a worthless people (*v.* 12).—I. A wretched moral state, "fallow ground." 1. Unloveliness; 2. Unfruitfulness. II. An urgent moral duty, "break up," etc. 1. Moral ploughing: think what God has been to us, what we have been to Him; 2. Moral sowing; 3. Moral reaping. III. A solemn moral suggestion, "It is time." 1. No time to lose; 2. Much time had been lost; 3. Only now that the work can be done. IV. A glorious moral prospect.[e]

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

1, 2. (1) feedeth on wind, a prov. expression, signifying labour in vain. east wind, blighting and desolating: a fig. of the idol helps, and national alliances, wh. Israel sought. lies, by wh. they deceive themselves. oil . . Egypt, as a present or tribute, to win favour and proteotion.[a] (2) controversy, or charges to urge against. Jacob, here prob. intended to represent the entire nation descended from him.

Worthless soul-food (*v.* 1).—"Wind." I. Sensual indulgences are worthless soul-food. II. So are worldly distinctions. III. And also religious formalities.[b]

Oil (*v.* 1).—Syria is a land in which olives abound, and particularly that part of it which the people of Israel inhabited. This explains the reason why the Jews, when they wished to court the favour of their neighbours, the Egyptians, sent them a present of oil. The Prophet thus upbraids his degenerate nation for the servility and folly of their conduct: "Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind; he daily increaseth lies and desolation: and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt." The Israelites, in the decline of their national glory, carried the produce of their olive plantations into Egypt, as a tribute to their ancient oppressors, or as a present to conciliate their favour, and obtain their assistance, in the sanguinary wars which they were often compelled to wage with the neighbouring states. Oil is now presented in the East, to be burnt in honour of the dead, whom they reverence with a religious kind of homage. Mr. Harmer thinks it most natural to suppose that the Prophet Hosea refers to a similar practice, when he upbraids the Israelites with carrying oil into Egypt. They did not carry it thither in the way of lawful commerce; for they carried it to Tyre without reproof, to barter it for other goods. It was not sent as a present to the king of Egypt; for the Jewish people endeavoured to gain the friendship of foreign potentates with gold and silver. It was not exacted as a tribute; for when the king of Egypt dethroned Jehoahaz the king of Judah, and imposed a fine upon the people, he did not appoint them to pay so much oil, but so much silver and gold. But if they burnt oil in those early times in honour of their idols,

a "Oil was an important article of commerce with Egypt, as the oil-olive does not thrive in that country. Along the Nile the avenues are of mulberry, sycamore, and acacia trees. In Palestine the olives were abundant enough to make olive oil an article of export."—*Biblical Things.*

b Dr. Thomas.

"Nature is the true guide in our application of ornament. She delights in it, but ever in subserviency to use. Men generally pursue an opposite course, and adorn only to encumber. With the refined few, simplicity is the feature of greatest merit in ornament. The trifling, the vulgar-minded, and the ignorant, prize only what is striking and costly,—something showy in contrast, and dif-

and their departed friends, and the Jews sent it into Egypt with that intention, it is no wonder the Prophet so severely reproaches them for their conduct. Oil is in modern times very often presented to the objects of religious veneration in Barbary and Egypt. The Algerines, according to Pitts, when they are in the mouth of the straits, throw a bundle of wax candles, together with a pot of oil, overboard, as a present to the marabot or saint who lies entombed there, on the Barbary shore, near the sea.[c]

3—6. (3) took . . heel, Ge. xxv. 26. A symbol of his spirit as the *supplanter*. power with God, Ge. xxxii. 24. (4) angel, who was the manifested Jehovah; God in human form for a man's apprehension. wept, this is not stated in Genesis.[a] found him, or met with him, Ge. xxxv. 9, 10. (5) his memorial, Ex. iii. 15. "A name wh. is also a remembrancer of the great characteristic of the Being spoken of." (6) turn thou, from wilfulness and idolatry back to God. keep mercy, *etc.*, Mi. vi. 8.

Beth-el (*v.* 4).—1. The most household name of all the villages or towns of the Bible; 2. The home of the patriarchs; 3. Jacob came here; 4. It has come to be one of the most pathetic names in the Bible; 5. Its after-history; 6. What is it now?[b]

Ruins.—

And who art thou that mournest me? replied the ruin grey,
And fearest not rather that thyself may prove a castaway?
I am a dried and abject branch: my place is given to thee;
But woe to every barren graft of thy wild olive tree.
Our day of grace is sunk in night, our time of mercy spent,
For heavy was my children's crime, and strange their punishment;
Yet gaze not idly on our fall, but, sinner, warned be,
Who spared not His chosen place, may send His wrath on thee.

7—11. (7) he . . merchant, lit. as marg. *Canaan is he:*[a] a nation of traffickers. balances of deceit, Am. viii. 5; Mi. vi. 11. oppress, or use violence. (8) become rich, and so Ephraim tries to persuade himself that he cannot be bad, as the Prophets make out, for do not the signs of Divine blessing plainly rest upon his labours? (9) and, read *and yet*. Jehovah is the only source of true prosperity, and in His way and time only could true success come. feast, Le. xxiii. 42, 43. (10) similitudes, comparisons, parables, types, etc.[b] (11) Gilead, E. of Jordan. Gilgal, W. of Jordan; together representing the whole country. heaps, *i.e.* no better than heaps.

God's method of teaching the great teachers of the world (*v.* 10).—I. By visions which serve to show—1. The distinguishing glory of the human mind; 2. The accessibility of the human mind to God. II. By similitude. 1. It makes the spiritual more attractive; 2. It makes the material appear more divine.

12—14. (12) fled, Ge. xxviii. 5. served, *etc.*, Ge. xxix. 20, 28. (13) prophet, Ex. xii. 50, 51, xiii. 3. (14) leave his blood,[a] or his blood-guiltiness to bring down on him the merited punishment. his reproach, or blasphemy.

Conjugal affection.—Lieutenant Shillibeer has recorded a touching example of conjugal affection, which occurred at Novaheevah, an island of the Marquesas. Lieutenant Bennett, of the royal marines, took for his *tayo* a young man of manly stature, and of an exceedingly interesting and penetrating countenance. The

ficult to be obtained."—*Moir.*

c Paxton.

a "From bodily wrestling Jacob betook him to spiritual weapons; he poured forth tears with earnest supplications and prayers, and strove not so much for victory as for a blessing; the only way for a feeble impotent creature to prevail over his Creator."—*Lowth.*

b P. Hood.

"*Scala Cœli*, the heavenly ladder, is changed into *Gradus Inferni*, steps to hell; and devils are dancing for joy where angels came down from heaven to earth."—*T. Fuller.*

a "A play on the double sense of the Heb. word *Canaan*, *i.e.* a Canaanite, and a merchant."—*Fausset.*

b "It was an ancient custom in the E. parts of the world to convey instructions under *symbols* and sacred *hieroglyphics*. Pythagoras learned this method in his travels in the East, and the conversation he had there with the Jews, and other wise men of those parts."—*Lowth.*

a "Not take away the guilt and penalty of the innocent blood shed by Ephraim in general, and to Moloch in par-

ticular." — *Fausset.*

"The imprecation, 'His blood be upon him,' was an ordinary expression of the Jews, when a man had been lawfully put to death, and was used to declare that they were not guilty of his blood. The blood wh. was found on the sword was sometimes wiped on the head of the slain; wh. circumstance may perhaps explain the expression." — *Biblical Things.*

♭ *Whitecross.*

youth was captivated with the navigators, who showed him much attention. He thought the country of such men must be a very fine place, and became the subject of a strong desire to see it. He was encouraged to expect the enjoyment of this felicity, by means of the ship *Briton*. His intention was soon communicated to his wife, a person of extraordinary beauty. The thought of the separation cut her to the heart. While the officers were walking on the beach, she came up to them in a state of frenzy, talking with inconceivable rapidity; not a word, however, could they distinguish but *vahana Picatanee*, "husband to England." She cried and laughed alternately, tore her hair, beat her breast, threw herself on the ground, danced, sang, and, at length, in a paroxysm of despair, cut herself in several places with a shark's tooth, which, until then, she had concealed, and before they could disarm her, she had done herself considerable injury. Her distress was unabated, while the officers continued ignorant of the cause, till the arrival of Otaheitean Jack, who solved the mystery by translating her lamentations. The officers immediately attempted to banish her sorrow by the removal of its cause; they assured her that her husband should not be permitted to leave the island without her concurrence. This intimation had the desired effect, her tears subsided, she became placid and cheerful, and appeared not to notice the wounds she had inflicted with the tooth of the shark. The spectators were deeply impressed by this affecting scene, which clearly proved that the natives of the Marquesas are destitute of neither feelings nor affection.♭

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

1, 2. (1) **trembling**, better trans., *there was fear.*[a] **died**, from his position and influence as the ruling tribe. (2) **kiss the calves**, *comp.* 1 Ki. xix. 18. An act of adoration to the golden calves.

The backslider instructed and admonished (*v.* 1).—I. Explain the words of the text; Ephraim is but another name for Israel, *i.e.* the Church, which had become proud and idolatrous. II. Apply them.

3—5. (3) **morning dew**, these, in the E., suddenly and utterly vanish when the sun rises.[a] **chaff**, *comp.* Ps. i. 4, xxxv. 5; Is. xvii. 13. **chimney**, or "lattice-work placed under the wall-plate of the roof." (4) **yet**, *etc.*, Is. xliii. 11. (5) **I did know**, an expressive sentence, meaning, "it was indeed I who did it." I took special care of thee in the long wilderness-time.

The life of the wicked (*v.* 3).—I. It is deceptive. II. It is worthless. III. It is evanescent. IV. It is offensive.♭

The vanity of human life.—

Like to the falling of a star,
Or as the flight of eagles are;
Or like the fresh spring's gaudy hue,
Or silver drops of morning dew;
Or like a wind that chafes the flood,
Or bubbles which on water stood—
E'en such is man, whose borrowed light
Is straight called in, and paid to-night,

"His words were listened to with deference, through the power with wh. he could back them. For the pre-eminency of the tribe of Ephraim see Ge. xlix. 26; De. xxxiii. 17; Ju. viii. 1, xii. 1.

a Da. ii. 35; Ho. vi. 4.

♭ *Dr. Thomas.*

"I meddle with no man's business but my own; I rise in a morning early, study moderately, eat and drink cheerfully, live soberly, take my innocent pleasures freely." —*Otway.*

The wind blows out, the bubble dies,
The spring entombed in autumn lies,
The dew dries up, the star is shot,
The flight is past,—and man forgot.[c]

[c] *H. King.*

6—8. (6) according, *etc.*, *i.e.* the more care I took of them, the more perversely they acted towards me. (7) as a leopard, Heb. *namer*. "Leopards lurk in thickets, and thence spring on their victims. (8) bear, she-bear, in the time of her most dangerous irritation. caul, or chamber; the *pericardium;* the membrane enclosing the heart.

Prosperity injurious (*v.* 6).—I. The evils of unsanctified prosperity. 1. Selfish indulgence; 2. Pride; 3. Unmindfulness of God. II. The instruction derived from this example. 1. A very humbling view of human nature; 2. The necessity of caution and circumspection; 3. The perils of prosperity should check our eagerness after worldly ease and affluence; 4. Learn resignation under afflictive dispensations.[a]

Salvation from God without the intervention of saints.—A Protestant who rented a small farm under Alexander, second Duke of Gordon, having fallen behind in his payments, a vigilant steward, in his Grace's absence, seized the farmer's stock, and advertised it to be sold by auction on a fixed day. The duke happily returned home in the interval, and the tenant went to him to supplicate for indulgence. "What is the matter, Donald?" said the duke, as he saw him enter with sad, downcast looks. Donald told him his sorrowful tale in a concise, natural manner: it touched the duke's heart, and produced a formal acquittance of the debt. Donald, as he cheerfully withdrew, was staring at the pictures and images which he saw in the ducal hall, and expressed to the duke, in a homely way, a wish to know what they were. "These," said the duke, who was a Roman Catholic, "are the saints who intercede with God for me." "My lord duke," said Donald, "would it not be better to apply yourself directly to God? I went to muckle Sawney Gordon, and to little Sawney Gordon, but if I had not come to your Grace's self, I could not have got my discharge, and both I and my bairns had been turned out from house and home."

[a] *W. Jay.*

"The mark of a man of probity is in his keeping reason at the head of practice; in being easy in his condition; to live in a crowd of objects, without suffering either in his sense, his virtue, or his quiet; to have a good understanding at home, and to be governed by that Divine principle that is within him; to be all truth in his words; and justice in his actions."—*Antoninus.*

9—11. (9) O Israel, *etc.*, better trans. "It hath destroyed thee, O Israel, that against Me thou hast set thyself, against thy help."[a] (10) I will, *etc.*, better, "Where is thy king now?" the *now* being emphatic. (11) king .. anger, 1 Sa. viii. 5, xv. 23, xvi. 1.

Man his own destroyer: God alone his Saviour (*v.* 9).—I. Destruction is possible to us men, even that of the highest, noblest, and divinest part of our nature. II. The only power by which we can destroy ourselves is the power of sinning. III. Every finally destroyed man is self-destroyed. IV. The self-destroyer who is in this perilous position may be saved from self-destruction. 1. A man cannot save himself; 2. No fellow-man can save a sinner; 3. God the only Saviour—what an encouragement to return to Him.[b]

The flying-fish.—The flying-fish, says the fable, had originally no wings, but being of an ambitious and discontented temper, she repined at being always confined to the water, and wished to soar in the air. "If I could fly like the birds," said she, "I

[a] *Spk. Com.*

[b] *S. Martin.*

"If a man is lost he has only himself to blame. It is told of some poor heathen that, to please their god, they put themselves to death in the following way:—They took a little boat, went out into the deep water, then took a little vessel in their hand, put it over the boat, filled it with water, and then poured the water into the boat. So they went on and on; the boat kept filling and filling; presently it began to trem

should not only see more of the beauties of nature, but I should be able to escape from those fish which are continually pursuing me, and which render my life miserable." She therefore petitioned Jupiter for a pair of wings: and immediately she perceived her fins to expand. They suddenly grew to the length of her whole body, and became, at the same time, so strong as to do the office of a pinion. She was at first much pleased with her new powers, and looked with an air of disdain on all her former companions; but she soon perceived herself exposed to new dangers. While flying in the air, she was incessantly pursued by the tropic bird and the albatross; and when for safety she dropped into the water, she was so fatigued with her flight that she was less able than ever to escape from her old enemies the fish. Finding herself more unhappy than before, she now begged of Jupiter to recall his present; but Jupiter said to her, "When I gave you your wings, I well knew they would prove a curse; but your proud and restless disposition deserved this disappointment. Now, therefore, what you begged as a favour keep as a punishment." [c]

12—14. (12) **bound up**, laid by in store, and will surely be remembered and punished. (13) **sorrows**, *etc.*, great calamities are often likened to the pains of childbirth. (14) **O death**, *etc.*, comp. 1 Co. xv. 55.[a] **repentance**, here change of mind and purpose respecting thy recovery and restoration.

The foe disarmed (*v.* 14).—The text is a glorious promise that God will destroy the enemy which man most dreads to meet. There are three ways in which Jesus conquers and spoils death. 1. By His own dying on the cross; 2. By His presence in the believer when dying: 3. By His power at the resurrection.[b]

Death conquered.—Death, which sin brought into the world, is now become the only means to destroy and kill sin. Death, which is contrary unto life, is now turned into a port and passage into life. Death, that before was an armed enemy, is now made a reconciled and firm friend, a physician to cure all diseases, and an harbinger to make way for glory. The grave, also, by Christ's lying in it, is become a bed of rest, in which His saints fetch a short slumber until He awaken them to a glorious resurrection. It is the chamber into which He invites His beloved ones, to hide themselves until His indignation be past; the ark into which He shuts His Noahs while He destroys the world with an overflowing deluge of wrath and displeasure.[c]—*The love of Christ.*—In the year 1848, out in Italy where the field of Novara was fought, and there were dreadful scenes of blood, they made a conscription. Every tenth man was picked, and must go and serve, if he were called upon. And there was one who was called upon to take upon himself the position of a soldier, and go forth and fight: but he had no soldier's heart. His mother tenderly loved him: he was her darling; and his white-haired father was broken-hearted at the thought. They offered £80 if they could get a substitute, but they could not get one. There were not many who were willing to go, and £80 would not get one. The day came, and there was the young man, his face pale, and his heart quivering: his parents hanging about, and his sisters weeping. But at last a cousin came, and he said, "I cannot bear to see you like that; I would rather die for you. I am an orphan, and have no one to care for me. I

ble, and then sank, and thus they died. This is just what the sinner does. He goes on in sin for a month. What is he doing? He is putting water in the boat. He goes on for a year. He is putting water in the boat. He goes on yet longer. Take care! take care! the boat is filling—the sinner is filling it. Stop! or it may sink for ever."—*Rev. Thomas Jones.*

c Evenings at Home.

a "Applied to Ephraim these strong figures signify, that though they be in never so hopeless and desperate a condition, God will, in due time, deliver them out of it."—*Lowth.*

b Dr. J. Edmond.

"Christ came to grapple with Death on the cross, and that horrid monarch was armed with all his terrors; he had his full force upon him, and darted his sting with such violence and vengeance into His whole frame, that he struck that sting through His body and soul into the cross, and could never draw it out any more; so that the king of terrors has never been able to bring his sting to the death-bed of a Christian, nor will he to the end of the world. But this was not glory enough for

will go for you." "Will you?" said the old man, "then I will give you £100." "No," said he; "do you think I would be a hireling, to sell my blood? I go because I love him." He would not take a farthing. He went to the field, and fell, and they put up a monument for him, with the inscription that he went to the battle, and died for the love of his friend. Now that was grand, in its way; but, oh! how grander it was of Jesus! We were conscripted to die. He was no orphan: He was His Father's darling,—His beloved Son,—but He came and gave Himself for us. He died on the cross for us. Now, remember, when once that young man had got a substitute, he was free for life; they would never come on him again. Of course, if he did not put in his claim the next time the conscription came, they might take him; but if he said, "You have no claim on me,—I sent a substitute. My substitute died. I am free—free for ever,"—they would admit the claim. So if we, on the last day, can put in our claim to Christ; if we can say, "Lord, I was drawn to death, but for love of me the blessed Saviour died. I have nothing to say, but that Jesus is my Saviour,"—we shall be saved. His blood will cancel our sins.[d]

15, 16. (15) **east wind**, Eze. xix. 12. **spring**, or cistern. **pleasant vessels**, "cherished possessions. All valuables capable of being sacked." (16) **become desolate**, or find out her guiltiness.[a] Samaria is here introduced as representing the whole kingdom.

Reverses of fortune in human life (*v.* 15).—I. Reverses in human fortune are sometimes very striking. II. They are generally brought about by secondary instrumentality. III. They are under the direction of God. Learn—1. To acquiesce in His dispensations; 2. To look to Him for all that is good.[b]

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

1—3. (1) **return**, or "return quite home to the Lord."[a] **fallen**, into all your troubles as a direct consequence of your sins (ch. xiii. 9). (2) **words**, not formal sacrifices; but penitent confessions and prayers. **receive us graciously**, lit. *give good.*[b] **calves . . lips**, He. xiii. 15, praises of our lips. (3) **Asshur**, or Assyria. With this nation Israel had been in alliance. **horses**, the type of Egypt, from whence the horses had first been brought. **in thee**, *comp.* Ps. x. 14, lxviii. 5.

Israel exhorted to return unto the Lord (*v.* 1).—We notice here—I. An awful fact stated. Israel had fallen from—1. Their allegiance to God; 2. His worship; 3. Their enjoyment of His favour. II. An affectionate exhortation urged. 1. The persons addressed; 2. The nature of the address; 3. The Object to whom they were to return. III. Instructive direction administered. Take away all iniquity—1. From our affections, that we may no longer love it; 2. From our conscience, that we may no longer labour under the burden of it; 3. From our lives, that it may not have dominion over us; 4. From our hearts, that we may be dead to it. Receive graciously—1. Our prayers; 2. Our persons. IV. Returns of gratitude expressed. Gratitude is—1. A debt which we all owe to God; 2. Which gracious souls are ready to pay. Learn: (1) Neither our civil nor our religious

our Almighty Conqueror; He went down into death's dark dominions, fought him upon his own ground, tore his crown from off his head, broke his sceptre to shivers, and with the triumph of a conquering God He said, 'O death! I will be thy plague. O grave! I will be thy destruction.'"—*F. Ryland*, 1786.
c W. Spurstowe 1659.
d S. Coley.

a 2 Ki. xvii. 6. "Shalmaneser began the siege of Samaria in 723 B.C. Its close was in 721 B.C., the first year of Sargon, who seems to have usurped the throne of Assyria whilst Shalmaneser was at the siege of Samaria."—*Fausset.*
b Dr. Thomas.

a "Our Rabbins say, 'Great is repentance, which maketh (men) reach even the very throne of glory.'"—*Kimchi.*
b "Whensoever we do any good, God works in us and by us; and whenever He rewards our acts He crowns His own gifts."—*S. Augustine.*
"In the last moment, even at the eleventh hour, for the remnant of your wasted life, there is an opportunity for escape. Embrace it. Turn to God and live—here, it may be for a moment; but there for ever and for ever."—*Beecher.*

liberties will preclude the possibility of falling by iniquity; (2) Those who have fallen should be induced to return to God; (3) Those who have returned should say, Bless the Lord, etc.[c]

4—7. (4) backsliding, wh. needs healing, bec. it is a sure sign of spiritual disease, wrongness of heart. freely, "with spontaneous, overflowing generosity." (5) dew, *comp.* Job xxix. 19; Pr. xix. 12; Mi. v. 7. lily,[a] prob. the scarlet lily, growing as freely as our poppy in the E. fields. as Lebanon, *i.e.* as the cedars of Lebanon. (6) olive tree, wh. never loses its leaves.[b] smell, the fragrance of the cedars has been noticed by travellers.[c] (7) revive, as corn refreshed by rain. grow, or blossom. scent, or renown.

The dew an emblem of the Holy Spirit (*v.* 5).—I. The influences of the Spirit are like dew, early in their descent. II. They are copious. III. Silent. IV. Fertilising and refreshing. V. Temporary, they need to be renewed.[d]

The smell of Lebanon.—Le Bruyn concludes his description of Lebanon with an account of the cedar-apples, or the fruit which these celebrated trees produce. He cut one of them in two, and found that the smell within exactly resembled turpentine. They exuded a juice from small oval grains, with which a great many small cavities are filled, which also resembles turpentine, both in smell and in clamminess. These cedar-apples must be classed with the scented fruits of the Oriental regions; and have perhaps contributed greatly to the fragrance for which the sacred writers so frequently celebrate the mountains of Lebanon (*Paxton*).—Not only both the great and small cedars of Lebanon have a fragrant smell, but Maundrell found the great rupture in that mountain, which "runs at least seven hours' travel directly up into it, and is on both sides exceedingly steep and high, clothed with fragrant evergreens from top to bottom, and everywhere refreshed with fountains, falling down from the rocks in pleasant cascades, the ingenious works of nature. These streams all uniting at the bottom, make a full and rapid torrent, whose agreeable murmuring is heard all over the place, and adds no small pleasure to it" (*Burder*).—The approach to Lebanon is adorned with olive plantations, vineyards, and luxuriant fields; and its lower regions, besides the olive and the vine, are beautified with the myrtle, the styrax, and other odoriferous shrubs; and the perfume which exhales from these plants is increased by the fragrance of the cedars which crown its summits, or garnish its declivities. The great rupture which runs a long way up into the mountain, and is on both sides exceedingly steep and high, is clothed from the top to the bottom with fragrant evergreens, and everywhere refreshed with streams, descending from the rocks in beautiful cascades, the work of Divine wisdom and goodness. These cool and limpid streams uniting at the bottom, form a large and rapid torrent, whose agreeable murmur is heard over all the place, and adds greatly to the pleasure of that romantic scene. The fragrant odours wafted from the aromatic plants of this noble mountain have not been overlooked by the sacred writers. The eulogium which Christ pronounces on the graces of the Church contains the following direct reference: "The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon;" and the Prophet Hosea, in his glowing description of the future prosperity of Israel, converts the assertion of Solomon into a

c *Beta* in 400 Sks.

a "No plant is more productive than the lily, ne root often producing 50 bulbs."—*Pliny.*

b Ju. ix. 9; Ps. lii. 8, cxxviii. 3; Je. xi. 16.

c "The fresh mountain breezes, filled in early summer with the fragrance of the budding vines, and throughout the year with the rich odours of numerous aromatic shrubs, call to mind the words of Sol., 'The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.'"—*Porter.*

d *J. Lee, M.A.*

"Writing in view of an olive grove, *Thomson* says: 'To me this noble grove, spreading like a silver sea along the base of the hills, and climbing the ascending terraces, is perfectly charming; and it speaks of peace and plenty, food and gladness.'"—*Land and Book.*

In the course of his travels in the East, Dr. Bonar informs us that he came to immense beds of lilies and hyacinths of various kinds. They grew thickly together, and covered miles of sand. "They grow," he tells us, "in almost incredible numbers and luxuriance, often where nothing else flourishes, corroborating the Prophet's allusion, 'He shall grow as the lily.'

promise : "His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon." The richness and flavour of the wines produced in its vineyards have been celebrated by travellers in all ages. Rauwolf declares that the wine which he drank at Canobin, a Greek monastery on Mount Libanus, far surpassed any he had ever tasted. His testimony is corroborated by Le Bruyn, who pronounces the wines of Canobin better and more delicate than are to be found anywhere else in the world. They are red, of a beautiful colour, and so oily that they adhere to the glass ; these are so excellent, that our traveller thought he never tasted any kind of drink more delicious. The wines produced on other parts of the mountain, although in much greater abundance, are not nearly so good. To the delicious wines of Canobin the Prophet Hosea certainly refers in this promise : "They that dwell under his shadow shall return ; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine : the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon." De la Roque, who also visited Canobin, entirely agrees with these travellers in their account of the superior quality of its wines ; and expresses his full conviction, that the reputation of the wines of Lebanon mentioned by the Prophet is well founded. Volney asserts, indeed, that he found the wines of Lebanon of a very inferior quality ; this may be true, and yet the testimony of these respectable travellers perfectly correct. He might not be presented with the most exquisite wine of Canobin, which has deservedly obtained so high a character ; or the vintage of that year might be inferior. But whatever might be the reason, no doubt can be entertained concerning the accuracy of other equally credible witnesses, who, from their own experience, and with one voice, attest the unrivalled excellence of the wine of Lebanon. These travellers admit that the neighbourhood of Canobin produces wines of inferior quality ; but when the wine of Lebanon is mentioned by way of eminence, the best is undoubtedly meant. In striking allusion to the scenery and productions of that mountain, it is promised in the sixth verse : "His branch shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell (or his memorial, as the original term signifies) as Lebanon." His branches shall spread like the mighty arms of the cedar, every one of which is equal in size to a tree ; his beauty shall be as the olive tree, which is generally admitted to be one of the most beautiful productions of nature ; and his smell, his very memorial, shall be as the wine of Lebanon, which delights the taste, and the very recollection of which excites the commendation of those that have drank it, long after the banquet is over. The meaning of these glowing figures undoubtedly is, that the righteous man shall prosper by the distinguishing favour of Heaven ; shall become excellent, and useful, and highly respected while he lives : and after his death his memory shall be blessed and embalmed in the affectionate recollection of the Church, for the benefit of many who had not the opportunity of profiting by his example.[e]

8, 9. (8) what . . idols? the indication of his giving up, once and for all, his idolatry. I . . tree, this is the satisfied expression of Israel, rejoicing in God's restoring mercies, and heartily acknowledging that all grace and good has come from God.[a] (9) wise, Da. xii. 3. Comp. "He that hath ears to hear,

Close by these lilies there grew several of the thorn-shrubs of the desert ; but above them rose the lily, spreading out its fresh leaf of green as a contrast to the dingy verdure of these prickly shrubs. 'As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.' Whether this be the lily of the valley I do not know. It grows on hill and valley all over this region. Nor is it of one species only, but of several, as we could easily see, though only one species was in flower. That which was in flower the Arabs called *us-weih*. It was larger than the others, and shot up its lilac, hyacinth-looking flowers from a tapering stalk, sometimes two feet long."

"Every man has a Paradise around him till he sins, and the angel of an accusing conscience drives him from his Eden. And even then there are holy hours, when this angel sleeps, and man comes back, and with the innocent eyes of a child looks into his lost Paradise again—into the broad gates and rural solitudes of nature."—*Longfellow.*

e Paxton.

a "Ephraim gratefully acknowledges that he is in a flourishing and thriving condition ; and

then God puts him in mind that his fruitfulness is wholly owing to the Divine blessing."—*Lowth.*

"To those who are *not wise*, but who cavil at God's doings and carp at His Word, the history of God's ancient people, the Jews, is a hard problem, an unintelligible riddle, an insoluble enigma. But he that is *wise* will understand these things."—*Wordsworth.*

"God does not say, I will heal thy backsliding for any certain term of years, but I will heal thy backslidings in general. If you have been a backslider these fifty years—nay, were it possible for you to have been a backslider a thousand years, yet if with hearty repentance and true faith you turn unto Him, He will abundantly pardon you. Oh, dear sir, if any one had need to despair of mercy, I had: but Jesus has washed me in His blood, and I know that my Redeemer liveth."—*Whitefield.*

b R. Cecil, M.A.

"A parable is not like a looking-glass, to represent all forms and faces, but a well-drawn picture, to remonstrate that person whereof it is a counterfeit. It is like a knife: with the half it cuts not, with the back it cuts not; it cuts with the edge. A candle is made to light

let him hear." This *v.* may be regarded as the sum of Hosea's book.

Rejecting false confidences (*v.* 8).—Let us consider—I. The sentiment of the penitent in regard to his idols. II. What is here declared to be the mind of God respecting the penitent.[b]

Throwing down the idols.—A native gentleman of India, in relating his history to one of the missionaries, said: "My father was an officiating priest of a heathen temple, and was considered in those days a superior English scholar; and, by teaching the English language to wealthy natives, realised a very large fortune. At a very early period, when a mere boy, I was employed by my father to light the lamps in the pagoda, and attend to the various things connected with the idols. I hardly remember the time when my mind was not exercised on the folly of idolatry. These things, I thought, were made by the hand of man, can move only by man, and, whether treated well or ill, are unconscious of either. Why all this cleaning, anointing, illuminating, etc.? One evening, these considerations so powerfully wrought on my youthful mind, that instead of placing the idols according to custom, I threw them from their pedestals, and left them with their faces in the dust. My father, on witnessing what I had done, chastised me so severely as to leave me almost dead. I reasoned with him, that if they could not get up out of the dust, they were not able to do what I could; and that instead of being worshipped as gods, they deserved to lie in the dust, where I had thrown them. He was implacable, and vowed to disinherit me, and, as the first step to it, sent me away from his house. He, however, relented on his death-bed, and left me all his wealth.—*Destruction of idols.*—On the 8th September last, the Chief Secretary of State, with others high in rank, were sent to the village where the royal idols were kept, with orders to burn them. They started at about half-past three in the afternoon well armed, and hasted to Ambohimanambolu, a distance of seven miles, to execute the queen's commands. On arriving at the village, the first thing to do was to read the Prime Minister's letter, and secure possession of the idol's house. This done, a fire was kindled with the materials of the fence which surrounded the house, and had been pulled down by the queen's orders on the day she laid the corner-stone of the Chapel Royal. Then first the long cane, called *Tsoutsonaraka*, which usually preceded the idol in processions or journeyings, was cast into the fire; then twelve bullock's horns, from which the sacred sprinklings were made; three scarlet umbrellas followed; and the silk lamba or loose-flowing garment which concealed the idol when suspended on the person of its keeper when it travelled. The idol's case succeeded; this case was made of a small tree hollowed, having a lid or cover fitted to it; and lastly the idol itself. This idol consisted altogether of two thicknesses of scarlet silk, about three feet long and three inches wide, having a small piece of wood, about the length and size of a finger to the second joint, inserted in the middle between the silks, in such a manner that, by turning the silks a little way, the point of the wood could be made to touch water, or anything else that was to be sanctified: at either extremity of the silk a silver chain was sewed or fastened, equal in length to the width of the silk. On seeing the idol the people said, "You cannot burn him, he is a god!"

to which the Christian officer replied, "If he be a god he will not burn, we are going to try;" and when enveloped in flames one of them held it up on a stick to show it was burning. On the day following, four others were burned, and on the 10th September two more. One of those burnt was the sovereign's private idol, which was found to consist of a small quantity of sand, tied in a cloth.[c]

us, not to heat us; a stove is made to heat us, not to light us."—*T. Adams.*

[c] *W. Pool.*

JOEL.

Introduction.

1. Author. JOEL.=*Jehovah is his God.* Nothing known of him save that he was the son of Pethuel (i. 1). **II. Time,** and **III. Place.** His prophecies give no specifications of *time* or *place;* but all the internal indications of the book point to Judæa—probably to Jerusalem, with its temple, altar, priesthood, and solemn assemblies, as the *sphere* of his labours: and to the *date* as among the earliest of those belonging to written prophecy. The coincidences between Joel and Amos cannot well be regarded as accidental (*see* Jo. iii. 16, Am. i. 2; Jo. iii. 18, Am. ix. 18). If we may assume that one of these Prophets borrowed expressions from the other, the priority will naturally be given to Joel, from whose closing address (iii. 16) Amos takes the opening words of his prophecies. He must then be placed as early at least as the reign of Uzziah, and perhaps earlier. **IV. Style,** and **V. Theme.** The writings of Joel bear the full impress of culture in a prophetic school. His Hebrew is of the purest kind; his style is easy, flowing, elegant, and adorned with magnificent imagery; and for vividness and power of description he is not surpassed by any of the Prophets. The immediate occasion of his prophecies is a double plague of drought and locusts, which has already invaded the land, and whose desolating progress he describes in poetic strains of matchless elegance and power. He summons the people of all classes to repentance, and promises upon this condition not only the restoration of the land to its former fruitfulness, but also the outpouring of God's Spirit upon all flesh, the triumph of the covenant people over all their foes, and an era of universal holiness and peace. In this respect he is a model for all the Prophets that come after him. They all with one accord look forward beyond the calamities of the present time, and the heavier impending calamities which they are commissioned to foretell in the near future, to the glory of the latter days, when Zion shall be made triumphant over all her foes, and the whole earth shall be given her for her inheritance. The Apostle Peter, in his address on the day of Pentecost, quotes a remarkable prophecy of Joel. (Acts ii. 16—21; comp. with Joel ii. 28—32.)—*Dr. Barrows.*

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

This Book consists of three chapters, which may be divided into three discourses or parts.

PART I. Is an exhortation, both to the priests and to the people, to repent, by reason of the famine brought upon them by the palmer-worm, etc., in consequence of their sins (i. 1—20); and is followed by a denunciation of still greater calamities if they continue impenitent .....ii. 1—11

PART II. An exhortation to keep a public and solemn fast (ii. 12—17); with a promise of removing the calamities of the Jews on their repentance.....18—26

PART III. Predicts the general conversion and return of the Jews, and the destruction of their opponents, together with the glorious state of the Church that is to follow.....iii.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—4. (1) **Joel**, the name means "Whose God is Jehovah." **Pethuel**, not known. In the E. men were thus distinguished by giving their father's name. (2) **this . . days**, had they any experience of such a calamity as he denounces? (3) **tell**, *etc.*, *i.e.* not only former generations have known nothing so terrible, but the marvel of it will outlast three more generations. (4) **palmerworm**, *etc.*, by these terms four species or stages of locusts, rather than four different kinds of insects, are intended.[a]

National calamity (*vv.* 1—4).—We learn from this passage—I. That this calamity was Divinely revealed at first to the mind of one man. II. That it was unprecedented in history. III. That it was so tremendous as to command the attention of all generations. IV. That it was inflicted by the most insignificant of God's creatures.[b]

Joel.—A worshipper of Jehovah, second of the twelve minor Prophets. The time when he flourished is not known. The style of his prophecy is figurative, strong, and expressive. His predictions chiefly relate to the Chaldæan invasion of Judæa, under the figurative description of locusts coming upon the land; to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; to the blessings of the Gospel dispensation; the conversion of the Jews, the overthrow of God's enemies, and the glorious state of the Christian Church in the end of the world. The style of Joel is clear and elegant, and his descriptions are animated and highly poetical.[c]

5—7. (5) **drunkards**, these would be specially affected bec. the locusts would ruin the vineyards. But drunkards often stand as representing all self-indulgent sinners. (6) **a nation**, the locusts are so called because their progress is as orderly as a national army. **teeth**, *comp.* Re. ix. 8.[a] **cheek teeth**, or grinders. (7) **barked . . fig**, the locust "strips the vines of every leaf, and every cluster of grapes, and of every green twig." **white**, the bark of the fig is silvery white, and this shows up when the leafage has been removed.

A call to drunkards (*v.* 5).—Why should these drunkards now weep? I. Because they were to be deprived of the blessing they prized most. II. Because they were to lose the blessing they had abused.[b]

The fig tree.—So valuable is the fig tree in the land of Canaan, and so high is the estimation in which it is held, that to bark and kill it is reckoned among the severest judgments which God inflicted upon His offending people. The Prophet alludes in these words to the destructive progress of the locust, which, with insatiable greediness, devours the leaves and bark of every tree on which it lights, till not the smallest portion of rind is left, even on the slenderest twig, to convey the sap from the root, and leaves it white and withering in the sun, for ever incapable of answering the hopes of the husbandman. Such were the people of Israel, delivered by Jehovah, for their numerous and inveterate transgressions, into the hands of their cruel and implacable enemies.[c]—"Mahomet is said to have been led to put the prohibition against the use of wine, in the Koran, by an incident

a "The Prophet crowds together a number of locust-names to show that nothing shall remain undevastated by one or the other. The form of the v. shows it to be poetical." — *Spk. Com.*

"The marvel is that they all come in one year."—*S. Jerome.*

b *Dr. Thomas.*

c *Green's Bib. Dic.*

a "A large vineyard and garden adjoining mine was green as a meadow in the morning; but long before night it was naked and bare as a newly-ploughed field or dusty road."—*Thomson.*
"The jaws of the locusts are excessively hard and strong, capable of devouring not only the leaves, but when these fail, the bark, and even the solid wood of the trees."—*Newman.*
b *Dr. Thomas.*
c *Purton.*
"The skin of a man is sometimes spoken of as the bark of a tree. Thus it is said of those who have been severely flogged, 'Their backs are

like the margossa tree stripped of its bark:' which alludes to the custom of taking off the bark of that tree for medical purposes."—*Roberts. d Cheever.*

"How full of cheer, joyous, devout, and grateful is the soul to see again its unexhausted God thus pile the table of a world with bread! For what's the globe on which we all subsist? The table of immortal bounty 'tis, a feast perpetual, where unnumbered sons sit down to banquet as their sires withdraw, and in succession generations feed, contented rise, give thanks, and pass away."—*Hurdis.*

"Arabs have a strong respect for wheat in any shape. If a morsel of bread fall to the ground, an Arab will gather it up with his right hand, kiss it, touch his forehead with it, and place it in a recess or on a wall, where the fowls of the air may find it; for they say, 'We must not tread under foot the gift of God.' I have seen this reverence exhibited constantly by all classes of the people, by masters, servants, and even by little children. Moslems and Christians."—*Biblical Treasury.*

[a] Is. xxii. 12.

"They that talk of nothing but predestination, which occurred to himself. Passing through a village one day, he was delighted at the merriment of a crowd of persons, enjoying themselves with drinking at a wedding party; but being obliged to return by the same way next morning, he was shocked to see the ground, where they had been, drenched with blood, and, asking the cause, he was told that the company had drunk to excess, and, getting into a brawl, fell to slaughtering each other. From that day his mind was made up,—the mandate went forth from Allah, that no child of the faithful should touch wine, on pain of being shut out from the joys of paradise. The simple truth we suppose to be, that Mahomet foresaw there would be no stability to the religion and empire he was building up, if the use of ardent spirits was permitted to his followers.[d]—*Not saved.*—"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!" Such are the words which the weeping Prophet Jeremiah put in the mouth of a "disobedient and gainsaying people." To us it seems strange that summer should be mentioned after the harvest, but this may be easily explained. In Palestine the autumnal rains begin to fall the last of October. This is the seed-time. Grain usually matures in May, which is therefore the time of harvest. Later, and during the summer, occurs the fig harvest. This, then, is the passage plainly expressed: "The grain harvest is past, the fig harvest is also ended, and we are not saved." The picture in all its sad beauty is this: the grain has been sown, the early rain has fallen, winter is over, the latter rain has also fallen, and the grain has matured. The reapers have entered the field and gathered much into the garner—but not all! The fig harvest, too, has come and is ended, but many remain ungathered. Here and there stalks of grain in the open field and figs upon the leafless trees remain, unsheltered and alone, when the harvesters have completed their work! These, when they find themselves left behind unsaved, lift up their voices with the mournful cry: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!"—*Thirty-five years' wheat imports.*—The imports of wheat into the United Kingdom have been subject to very great fluctuations during the last thirty-five years. In 1831 they amounted to 2,303,974 qrs., but they then rapidly declined, until in 1835 they had sunk to 66,905 qrs. Then they began to revive again, until in 1839 they had attained a total of 2,875,427 qrs. In 1840 there was a slight check, but in 1841 and 1842 there was a further advance, until a total of 3,040,269 qrs. was reached in the latter year. In the next three years the imports were relatively moderate, the total for 1845 being 1,141,957 qrs. In the next five years the receipts presented a considerable increase, until in 1850 they amounted to 4,830,263 qrs. In 1853 they advanced to 6,235,860 qrs., but in 1855 they sunk to 3,211,766 qrs. In the next five years the yearly figures were of great magnitude, 7,334,164 qrs. being the amount recorded for 1860. In 1861 the total went to 8,670,797 qrs., and in 1862 to 11,528,445 qrs., but it afterwards declined, until, in 1865, it had receded to 5,953,170 qrs. Last year it recovered to 6,764,419 qrs.

8—10. (8) lament,[a] words addressed poetically to the land. sackcloth, the usual accompaniment of mourning. husband, or betrothed, snatched away before marriage. (9) meat offering, *mincha*, Le. ii. 1; Ex. xxix. 40, 42. "The unbloody offering

made of flour, oil, and frankincense." (10) wasted, or fallow: or the crop on it is destroyed.

The fig tree peeled.—The Prophet Joel, in describing the ravages of a swarm of locusts, speaks of them as alighting on the fig trees, peeling off the bark with their teeth, and then leaving them entirely white, after completing this work of devastation. From the Prophet singling out the fig tree as exhibiting this appearance, one would suppose the wood of this tree to have a peculiar whiteness, which other trees do not possess in the same degree. On meeting with the fig tree for the first time, I was curious to ascertain whether this expectation was well founded or not. I broke off some of the tender twigs, removed the bark, and was pleased to find that the result confirmed my conjecture. Though I examined several other trees with reference to the same point, I satisfied myself that no one of them would present to the eye so remarkable an object as the fig tree, with its bark stripped off from top to bottom. To look over a landscape and see a multitude of these trees leafless, newly peeled, exposing to view the white wood, so peculiar to them as compared with other trees, would impress the spectator strongly with an idea of the desolating power of the locust; it was a master-stroke of the poet to fix on that circumstance for the purpose of conveying such an idea.[b]

Haymaking.—

Upon the grass no longer hangs the dew;
Forth hies the mower with his glittering scythe,
In snowy shirt bedight, and all unbraced,
He moves athwart the mead with sideling bend,
And lays the grass in many a swathey line;
In every field, in every lawn and meadow,
The rousing voice of industry is heard;
The haycock rises, and the frequent rake
Sweeps on the fragrant hay in heavy wreaths.
The old and young, the weak and strong are there,
And, as they can, help on the cheerful work.
The father jeers his awkward half-grown lad,
Who trails his tawdry armful o'er the field,
Nor does he fear the jeering to repay.
The village oracle and simple maid
Jest in their turns and raise the ready laugh;
All are companions in the general glee;
Authority, hard-favoured, frowns not there.
Some, more advanced, raise up the lofty rick,
Whilst on its top doth stand the parish toast
In loose attire and swelling ruddy cheek.
With taunts and harmless mockery she receives
The tossed-up heaps from fork of simple youth,
Who, staring on her, takes his arm away,
While half the load falls back upon himself.
Loud is her laugh, her voice is heard afar;
The mower busied on the distant lawn,
The carter trudging on his dusty way,
The shrill sound know, their bonnets toss in air,
And roar across the field to catch her notice:
She waves her arm to them and shakes her head,
And then renews her work with double spirit.

and will not proceed in the way of heaven till they be satisfied on that point, do as a man that would not come to London, unless at his first step he might set his foot upon the top of St. Paul's."—*Table Talk of John Selden.*

b Prof. Hackett.

"That we eat too much in proportion to our absolute wants cannot for a moment be doubted. But the pliancy of nature to throw off such repletion shows the skill of the great Architect in our construction. If it were not so, our health and happiness would be perpetually subjected to all the hazardous consequences arising out of the blindness of our appetites. As rational and recording beings, the time may come when it may be far otherwise. We are already far removed from the hunting savage, whose appetite, like the boa constrictor, is glutted at one meal for the sustenance of many days. But the true philosophy of eating will not be understood till we have discovered the means by which food may be so varied as to be the best antidote to disease. It must always be remembered, that as the waste of the body is constant and progressive, so ought to be the supply. Much is said of the virtues of ab-

stinence; but abstinence would seldom be required if intemperance did not exist: temperance is the happy medium by which both may be avoided."—*Frankhum.*

Thus do they jest and laugh away their toil
Till the bright sun, now past his middle course,
Shoots down his fiercest beams which none may brave.
The stoutest arm feels listless, and the swart
And brawny-shouldered clown begins to fail.
But to the weary, lo—there comes relief!
A troop of welcome children o'er the lawn
With slow and wary steps approach: some bear
In baskets oaten cakes, or barley scones,
And gusty cheese, and stoups of milk or whey.
Beneath the branches of a spreading tree,
Or by the shady side of the tall rick,
They spread their homely fare, and seated round,
Taste every pleasure that a feast can give.

11—13. (11) ashamed, *etc.*, comp. Je. xiv. 3. (12) pomegranate, Ex. xxviii. 34. palm, wh. long resists drought, because of its deep rooting. (13) come, or lead the way: show the example to the nation of bitter grief, distress, and humiliation.[a]

The advantages of a bad harvest (*v.* 11).—What do we mean by a bad harvest? Bad as compared with expectation; as compared with former years; as compared with the harvest of other lands. Let us mark some of the advantages. I. They recall us to a sense of our dependence on God. II. They awaken us to a deeper feeling of the evil of sin. III. They serve as a tie of discipline for the improvement of character and the promotion of the general good. IV. They impress the soul with a sense of its higher needs and duties. V. They invite us to draw nearer to God, and to regard Him as the only true and supreme God.[b]

a "Reference is to those priests whose turn it is to keep the night-watches in the temple."—*Lowth.*

b *W. Forsyth, M.A.*

14—17. (14) fast, *comp.* 2 Chr. xx. 3, 4. cry, in penitential pleadings. (15) the day, of national calamity by the visitation of the locusts. (16) joy, such as usually prevailed at the vintage feasts. (17) rotten, dried up in the ground.[a]

Granaries.—Dr. Shaw informs us that "in Barbary, after the grain is winnowed, they lodge it in *mattamores*, or subterraneous magazines, two or three hundred of which are sometimes together, the smallest holding four hundred bushels." And Dr. Russell says, "that about Aleppo, in Syria, their granaries are even at this day subterraneous grottoes, the entry to which is by a small hole or opening like a well, often in the highway; and as they are commonly left open when empty, they make it not a little dangerous riding near the villages in the night."[b]—*Pulse most nutritious food.*—The flesh-yielding qualities of all the pulse—or bean, pea, and lentil family—are very notable, but by no means a modern discovery. If Esau paid dearly for his mess of pottage, he had at least the advantage of a bowlful of the very best vegetable food for the support of his fleshy, hairy body; inasmuch as Esau's "red pottage" was made of "lentils," as appears from Genesis xxv. 30—34. Listen, too, ye patronisers of the "Arabic" *Revelanta, Relevanta, Ervelanta*, and all the other change-ringing in the pulse—the pea, bean, and lentil—line, to the words of Daniel on this special subject: "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink: then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat. . . . And at the end of ten days their counte-

a "The seed is sure to rot if they sow too long before the rains come."—*Thomson.*

b *Burder.* "But, to us, probability is the very guide of life."—*Butler.* "Home-made bread is undoubtedly more wholesome and more agreeable to the palate than ordinary baker's bread; the difference in these respects being due, not so much to adulteration as to the different methods of fermentation or purification pursued in each case. As respects nutritive properties, the two kinds of bread are nearly on a par, and no appreciable amount of nitrogen is lost in

nances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. Thus Melzar took away the portion of the meat and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse." And thus, too, pulse appears to be "a dainty dish," not only fit "to set before a king," but better than all the king's meat and all the king's wine! And, moreover, with reference to modern chemical analysis and its results, so far as regards this precise description of food, and considering the difference between heat-giving, which, in fact, is a sort of fat-yielding material, and actual solid flesh-yielding substance, how peculiarly and strictly, and even chemically, correct is the expression "fatter in flesh," when the flesh-yielding, rather than the merely fat-yielding, quality of the food is considered!

either process. It cannot, however, be too generally known that the whitest and best-looking flour and bread are by no means the most nutritious."—*Lancet.*

18–20. (18) **beasts groan**, bec. there is no green food left for them.[a] **perplexed**, "implying the restless gestures of the dumb beasts in their inability to find food. There is a tacit contrast between the sense of the brute creation, and the insensibility of the people."[b] (19) **wilderness**, or plains. (20) **cry**, such seems to the poet Prophet their mournful lowings and bleatings.

The influence of national calamities on the minds of the good (*v.* 19).—The effect on Joel was to excite him to prayer. I. This was right. 1. God requires it: 2. Christ engaged in it. II. This was wise. III. This was natural. Apply:—1. It is well when trial leads to prayer; 2. Trials prayerfully endured become blessings.[c]

a "This is poetic but true. A field over which this flood of desolation has rolled shows not a blade for even a goat to nip."—*Thomson.*

b Fausset.

c Dr. Thomas.

Felling timber.—There are doubtless different methods for felling timber, practised by various nations. In more rude and uncivilised times, and even still among people of that description, we may expect to find the most simple, and perhaps, as they may appear to us, inconvenient contrivances adopted. Prior to the invention of suitable implements, such means as would any way effect this purpose would certainly be resorted to. We must not be surprised then to find that formerly, and in the present day, trees were felled by the operation of fire. Thus Niebuhr says, "we cannot help condemning the unskilful expedient which these highlanders employ for felling trees: they set fire to the root, and keep it burning till the tree falls of itself." Mr. Bruce mentions whole forests, whose underwood and vegetation are thus consumed. Possibly this custom may be alluded to in Zech. xii. 6: "I will make the governors of Judah like a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheath, and they shall devour all the people round about." Such fires may be kindled either from design or accident. In such instances as obtaining the timber is the object, these fires are purposely lighted, and would be so managed as to do as little damage as possible, though some injury must certainly result from this method of felling trees. Strange as it may seem, we learn from Turner's *Embassy to Thibet*, that there "the only method of felling timber in practice, I was informed, is by fire. In the trees marked out for this purpose, vegetation is destroyed by burning their trunks half through; being left in that state to dry; in the ensuing year the fire is again applied, and they are burnt till they fall." An allusion to something of this kind the Prophet Joel certainly has in these words. Perhaps it may be rather to a general undesigned devastation by fire, than to any contrivance for procuring the timber.[d]

"When the fruit is yet green, the stem holds tightly to the bough; but when it is ripe it falls with the first wind. So hold on tightly to your plans in life until God shows you that they are ripe, that they have accomplished their purpose; and then let them go,—let them go without a murmur."—*Beecher.*

"Inquisitive and restless spirits frequently take refuge from their own scepticism in the bosom of a Church which pretends to infallibility, and, after questioning the existence of a Deity, bring themselves to worship a wafer."—*Macaulay.*

d Burder.

"Upon the question, What is the worst bread which is eaten? one answered, in respect of the coarseness thereof, Bread made of beans. Another said, Bread made of acorns. But the third hit the truth, and said, Bread taken out of other men's mouths, who are the true proprietors thereof. Such bread may be sweet in the mouth to taste, but is not wholesome in the stomach to digest."—*Thomas Fuller.*

Description of haymaking.—

Now swarms the village o'er the jovial mead:
The rustic youth, brown with meridian toil,
Healthful and strong, full as the summer rose,
Blown by prevailing suns; the ruddy maid,
Half-naked, swelling on the sight, and all
Her kindling graces burning o'er her cheek.
E'en stooping age is here; and infant hands
Trail the long rake, or, with the fragrant load,
O'ercharged, amid the kind oppression roll.
Wide flies the scattered grain; all in a row,
Advancing broad, or wheeling round the field,
They spread the breathing harvest to the sun,
That throws refreshful round a rural smell:
Or, as they rake the green-appearing ground,
And drive the dusky wave along the mead,
The russet haycock rises thick behind,
In order gay; while heard from dale to dale,
Waking the breeze, resounds the blended voice
Of happy labour, love, and social glee.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1, 2. (1) **trumpet**, cornet. **holy mountain**, *i.e. Mount Zion.* **day . . Lord**, *i.e.* of the Lord's judgments. (2) **darkness**, through the air being filled with locust swarms. **great people**, poetical figure, ch. i. 6.

The need of revival (*v.* 1).—I. From the state of the Church. 1. Ignorance; 2. Conformity to the world; 3. Want of activity; 4. Neglect of prayer. II. From the state of the general community. 1. Indifference; 2. Infidelity; 3. Intemperance; 4. The race for riches; 5. The love of pleasure.[a]

Revivals.—It is sometimes thought that a Church does not grow except in times of revival. I must dissent from that view. I frequently think that we grow more when we have not a revival in our Church than when we have one. A revival is one means of growing in religion; but there is a style of work that does not require a revival for its accomplishment, which is just as indispensable to Christian life as any other. Some reject the revival part of religious growth, and believe only in the continuous part. Their criticism is wrong on the opposite side. Both things are right and proper, if they are not forced out of their appropriate place. Man was made on a more comprehensive pattern than most persons are willing to admit; and growth in Christ Jesus requires a work so voluminous, and so protracted in time, that nought but the Spirit of God can consummate it. And as forests grow, from summer to summer, according to the supervising law of the seasons, so men grow, and become cedars of Lebanon, as it were, in accordance with the law of human development in this world.—*Aim for revivals.*—There are preachers by myriads and majorities, and deeply pious ones too, that never once in all their lives distinctly concentrated their purposes to the single point of converting men. Their efforts are to finish an eloquent sermon, to develop theological or Biblical truth, to thrill æsthetically an audience, to

[a] *G. Brooks.*

"Far in the woods of Maine, in the winter months, there are a hundred camps: and scores of axemen are busy cutting down the huge trees, and measuring the logs, and sorting them, and throwing them into deep gullies, where they will lie dry and undisturbed until the snows melt, and the spring floods come; and then they will be borne out of the ravines into the ever deep-flowing river, and from thence to some Penobscot or Kennebec; and there, collected together, and bound in mighty rafts, they will float down to tide-waters. So men are lying, dry logs along empty channels, hoping that some revival freshet

pour forth general religious emotion, to spread a popular fame, to gather crowds, to build a large church, etc. Verily these have often their reward, namely, success in their objects. But here is a lonesome preacher who does not object to all these; but with or without them, by study, by closet, by pulpit, by pastoral work, some or all, he means to convert souls, and just so many as he can. Where this is attained, all the other success is well enough. Where this is not attained, all the other success does not comfort him a penny; he goes off crestfallen and disappointed, indignant at the devil and himself. He will not stay there where Satan has beaten him; but he will go where, please God, he can get some souls.—*Ancient and modern revivals.*—The Acts of the Apostles supplies us with a permanent and sure test by which we can try and prove the genuineness or the spuriousness of modern revivals. The revival of the day of Pentecost was indisputably a genuine production of the Spirit. If we reject any modern revivals for any developments which appeared in the revival of Pentecost, we reject a true and real work of the Holy Spirit. In tracing the analogy between the early and modern revivals, it is not intended that their character is identical, but similar.

1. They both originate in a spirit of humble, united, and expectant prayer.
2. Both commence with the ministers of Christ.
3. Both are open and public, and attract public attention.
4. Both are liable to misrepresentation, derision, and mockery.
5. Both are produced and maintained by the same kind of preaching.
6. Both affect the bodily frame and the animal feelings of men.
7. Both produce numerous conversions.
8. Both give a powerful impulse to benevolence.
9. Both exert a strong and mighty influence on public opinion.
10. Both are permanent in their effects.

3–5. (3) fire, or like a fire, the effects of a fire on everything before them and behind. Their work is likened to that of spreading fire.[a] shall escape, from the ravages of the devouring insect. (4) horses, the locust's head somewhat resembles that of the horse.[b] (5) noise, "the noise made in marching and foraging was like that of a heavy shower on a distant forest."[c]

Locusts.—I never saw such an exhibition of the helplessness of man, as I have seen to-day. While we were sitting at dinner, a person came into the house, quite pale, and told us that the locusts were coming. Every face gathered darkness. I went to the door—I looked above, and all round, and saw nothing. "Look to the ground," was the reply, when I asked where they were. I looked to the ground, and there I saw a stream of young locusts without wings, covering the ground at the entrance of the village. The stream was about five hundred feet broad, and covering the ground, and moving at the rate of two miles an hour. In a few minutes they covered the garden wall some inches deep, and the water was immediately let into the channel, into which it flows to water the garden. They swim with the greatest ease over standing water, but the stream carried them away, and after floating in it about a hundred paces, they were drowned. All hands were now at work to keep them from the

will come, and sweep them down to deep waters of piety."—*Beecher.*

"One of the blessings of revivals of religion is that they surround men with sympathies that work toward religious growth. Hours of conviction are beneficent in this, that they shut men out from the world, and give them to themselves for the time being, and afford them the opportunity of dwelling in their thoughts upon things divine and spiritual. Anything is favourable to advancement in Christian manhood which tends to countervail that flow of sympathetic action by which the mind is carried away from intercourse with Christ and God."—*Spurgeon.*

a "Every blade of grass and every leaf is gnawed off as tho' it had been scorched by fire."—*Ludolf.*

b Re. ix. 7.

c Thomson.

"Our life is a vapour that appeareth for a little and then vanishes away; but this brief vapour life of ours is laden with eternity, and is a fact so real and grand as to strike the imagination with amazement. We can make it very beautiful or very gloomy. Let it not be to

any of us the mere thick mist that broods over the ceaseless machinery of toil and care, or the foul exhalation that rises from the muddy pools of the world's pleasures; but let it be what God intended it to be, a cloud in the height of heaven, in the world, but not of it; brightened by the Sun of Righteousness, and assuming fairer and more heavenly hues as it nears the gates of the west!"—*Hugh Macmillan.*

d Campbell.

a "When the head of the mighty column came in contact with the palace of the Emeer Asaad in Abeîh, they did not take the trouble to wheel round the corners, but climbed the wall like men of war, and marched over the top of it."—*Thomson.*

" The margin has, for 'blackness,' 'pot.' The Tamul translation has, 'All faces shall wither or shrivel.' Thus of a man in great poverty it is said, 'His face is shrivelled.' It is very provoking to tell a person his face is like the kare-chatte, *i.e.* the earthen vessel in which the rice is boiled. The 'pot' may allude to such a utensil, in being made black with

gardens, and to keep them from crossing the streams. To examine the phenomenon more nearly, I walked about a mile and a half from the village, following the course of the stream Here I found the stream extending a mile in breadth, and, like a thousand rivulets, all flowing into one common channel. It appeared as if the dust under my feet was forming into life, and as if God, when He has a controversy with a people, could raise the very dust of the earth on which they tread in arms against them. Men can conquer the tiger, the elephant, the lion, and all the wild beasts of the desert; he can turn the course of the mighty rivers, he can elude the violence of the tempest, and chain the wind to his car; he can raise the waters into clouds, and by the means of steam, create a power that is yet beyond human measurement: he can play with the lightnings of heaven, and arrest the thunders of heaven; but he is nothing before an army of locusts. Such a scene as I have seen this afternoon would fill England with more consternation than the terrific cholera. One of the people here informs us that he had seen a stream that continued ten days and nights flowing upon his place. During that time every person in the place was at work, to preserve his garden; as to the cornfields, they were obliged to give them up. They continued to the fifth day defending their gardens; on the evening of the fifth day, the locusts were between five and ten feet deep, and the mass by this time became terrible, and literally fell in pieces over the garden walls.[d]

6—8. (6) blackness, or paleness. (7) run, *etc.*, this is literally true.[a] (8) thrust another, out of rank; each shall preserve its place. sword, or *dart.* be wounded, or be broken up as a host.

Locusts.—We have an expression, Joel ii. 6, "Before their approach [of the locusts] the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness," which is also adopted by the Prophet Nahum (ii. 10), "The heart melteth, the knees smite together, much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness." This phrase, which sounds uncouth to an English ear, is elucidated by the following history from Oakley's *History of the Saracens* (vol. ii. p. 319), which we the rather introduce, as Mr. Harmer has referred this blackness to the effect of hunger and thirst; and Calmet, in his Dictionary, under the article "Obscure," has referred it to a bedaubing of the face with soot, etc., a proceeding not very consistent with the hurry of flight or the terror of distress. "Kumeil, the son of Ziyad, was a man of fine wit. One day Hejage made him come before him, and reproached him, because in such a garden, and before such and such persons, whom he named to him, he had made a great many imprecations against him, saying, The Lord blacken his face, that is, fill him with shame and confusion; and wished that his neck was cut off, and his blood shed." The reader will observe how perfectly this explanation agrees with the sense of the passages quoted above: to gather blackness, then, is equivalent to suffering extreme confusion, and being overwhelmed with shame, or with terror and dismay. In justice to Kumeil, we ought not to omit the ready turn of wit which saved his life. "It is true," said he, "I did say such words in such a garden; but then I was under a vine-arbour, and was looking on a bunch of grapes that was not yet ripe: and I wished it might be turned

black soon, that they might be cut off, and be made wine of." We see, in this instance, as says the sagacious moralist, that "with the well-advised is wisdom:" and "the tongue of the wise is health;" that is, preservation and safety. Dr. Shaw, speaking of locusts, says, "Those which I saw were much bigger than our grasshoppers: no sooner were any of them hatched, than they collected themselves into a body of about two hundred yards square, which, marching forward, climbed over trees and houses, and ate up everything in their way. The inhabitants made large fires on the approach of them, but to no purpose; for the fires were quickly put out by infinite swarms succeeding one another; while the front seemed regardless of danger; and the rear pressed on so close, that retreat was impossible." [b]

9—14. (9) **enter .. windows**, "if not carefully watched, they would have devoured the flowers wh. were carried into the inner rooms in pots." [a] (10) **earth**, *etc.*, Is. xiii. 10; Mat. xxiv. 29. [b] (11) **utter his voice**, Je. xxv. 30. (12) **turn**, *etc.*, Je. iv. 1. [c] (13) **rend your heart**, fig. for *be* sincere. Be anxious to secure inward contrition. [d] **gracious**, *etc.*, Ex. xxxiv. 6. (14) **who knoweth**, *etc.*, Jno. iii. 9. **blessing**, *i.e.* material out of wh. the continuance of the meat-offering may be secured.

Repentance recommended (*v.* 13).—I. The important direction given presupposes—1. A state of heedless inattention; 2. Of careless and criminal negligence; 3. Of obstinate disobedience. "Rend your hearts," this implies—(1) Excessive grief; (2) Great loathing and abhorrence; (3) Deep humility and earnest deprecation. II. The cheering assurance afforded, "For He is gracious," etc. 1. This revelation warrants our approach; 2. Requires our return; 3. Encourages our address. [e]

A great revival.—The Rev. Mr. Berridge is said in one year to have been visited by a thousand different persons under serious impressions; and it has been computed that, under his own and joint ministry of Mr. Hickes, about four thousand were awakened to a concern for their souls in the space of twelve months. Incredible as this may appear, it comes authenticated through a channel so respectable that it would be illiberal to disbelieve it. [f]

15—17. (15) **blow**, *etc.*, *v.* 1. **sanctify**, set apart, or appoint. (16) **bridegroom**, who was legally exempt from the necessity of attending the feasts. [a] All must come on this occasion. (17) **weep**, as leading the penitence of the people. **porch .. altar**, the place where the priests usually stood.

Marriage: pro and con.—But what do I trouble myself to finde arguments to perswade to, or commend marriage? Behold a brief abstract succinctly, pithily, pathetically, perspicuously, and elegantly delivered in twelve motions to mitigate the miseries of marriage, by Jacobus de Voragine.

1. Hast thou meanes? thou hast one to keep and increase it.
2. Hast none? thou hast one to helpe to get it.
3. Art in prosperity? thine happiness is doubled.
4. Art in adversity? shee'l comfort, assist, bear a part of thy burden to make it more tolerable.
5. Art at home? shee'l drive away melancholy.
6. Art abroad? shee looks after thee going from home, wishes for thee in thine absence, and joyfully welcomes thy returne.

the smoke."—*Roberts.*

b Burder.

"Just as the man cannot see through the glass on which he breathes, sin darkens the windows of the soul."—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

a Thomson.

b "As they approached, the density of the host obscured the solar rays, cast an awful gloom like that of an eclipse on the garden, and caused a noise like the rushing of a torrent."—*Forbes.*

c Ho. xii. 6, xiv. 1

d Ps. xxxiv. 18, li. 17, cxlvii. 3.

e Zeta in 400 Sks.

f Whitecross.

a De. xxiv. 5.

"If you are for pleasure, marry; if you prize rosy health, marry. A good wife is heaven's last, best gift to a man; his angel of mercy; minister of graces innumerable; his gem of many virtues; his casket of jewels. Her voice his sweetest music; her smiles his brightest day; her kiss the guardian of innocence; her arms the pale of his

safety, the balm of his health, the balsam of his life; her industry his surest wealth; her economy his safest steward; her lips his faithful counsellors; her bosom the softest pillow of his cares; and her prayers the ablest advocates of heaven's blessing on his head. A married man falling into misfortune is more apt to retrieve his situation in the world than a single one, chiefly because his spirits are soothed and retrieved by domestic endearments, and his self-respect kept alive by finding that although all abroad be darkness and humiliation, yet there is a little world of love at home over which he is a monarch."—*Bp. Taylor.*

b Burton.

7. There's nothing delightsome without society; no society so sweet as matrimony.

8. The band of conjugal love is adamantine.

9. The sweet company of kinsmen increaseth, the number of parents is doubled, of brothers, sisters, nephews.

10. Thou art made a father by a faire and happy issue.

11. Moses curseth the barrenness of matrimony, how much more a single life.

12. If nature escape not punishment, surely thy will shall not avoid it.

All this is true, say you, and who knows it not? But how easy a matter is it to answer these motives, and to make an *anti-parodia* quite opposite unto it! To exercise myself, I will essay.

1. Hast thou meanes? thou hast one to spend it.

2. Hast none? thy beggery is increased.

3. Art in prosperity? thy happiness is ended.

4. Art in adversity? like Job's wife, shee'l aggravate thy misery, vexe thy soule, make thy burden intollerable.

5. Art at home? shee'l scold thee out of doores.

6. Art abroad? if thou be wise keep thee so: shee'l perhaps graft hornes in thine absence, scowle on thee coming home.

7. Nothing gives more content than solitariness; no solitariness like this of a single life.

8. The band of marriage is adamantine; no hope of loosing it; thou art undone.

9. Thy number increaseth, thou shalt be devoured by thy wives friends.

10. Thou art made a cornuto by an unchast wife, and shalt bring up other folkes children in stead of thine owne.

11. Paul commends marriage, yet he preferres a single life.

12. Is marriage honourable? What an immortall crown belongs to virginity.

So Siracides himself speaks as much as may be for and against women; so doth almost every philosopher plead *pro* and *con;* every poet thus argues the case (though what cares *vulgus hominum* what they say?), so can I conceive, peradventure, and so canst thou. When all is said, yet since some be good, some bad, let's put it to the venture.[b]

18—20. (18) jealous, word applied to Jehovah's anxiety to preserve His covenant name from insults. (19) send you corn,[a] restoring thus the blessings wh., in judgment, had been destroyed. (20) northern army, these locusts came from the north, but there may be a further reference to the enemies from the north wh. other Prophets had threatened. east sea, *i.e.* the *Dead Sea.* utmost sea, the *Mediterranean.* stink, metaphor fr. locust.[b]

Interaction of the Divine and the human (*v.* 13).—We learn—I. That the material condition of a people depends upon the Divine operations. 1. The withdrawal of calamities; 2. The bestowment of blessings. II. That the Divine operations are influenced by the moral condition of the people. III. That the right moral conduct of a people will ensure them Divine benedictions.[c]

Locusts.—In some regions of the East the whole earth is at times covered with locusts for the space of several leagues, often to the depth of four, sometimes of six or seven inches. Their

a Ho. ii. 22.

b "Locusts perish when blown by a storm into the sea, or the desert, and emit from their putrefying bodies such a stench as often breeds a pestilence."—*Fausset.*

c Dr. Thomas. The present summer (1880) has been remarkable for the immense swarms of destructive insects which it has given life to all over the west, from Illinois to distant Oregon, and from Texas

approach, which causes a noise like the rushing of a torrent, darkens the horizon, and so enormous is their multitude, it hides the light of the sun, and casts an awful gloom, like that of an eclipse, over the field. Major Moore, when at Poonah, had the opportunity of seeing an immense army of these animals which ravaged the Mahratta country, and was supposed to have come from Arabia. "The column they composed," says he, "extended five hundred miles; and so compact was it when on the wing, that like an eclipse it completely hid the sun, so that no shadow was cast by any object;" and some lofty tombs distant from his residence not two hundred yards were rendered quite invisible. The noise they make in browsing on the trees and herbage may be heard at a great distance, and resembles the rattling of hail, or the noise of an army foraging in secret. The inhabitants of Syria have observed that locusts are always bred by too mild winters, and that they constantly come from the deserts of Arabia. When they breed, which is in the month of October, they make a hole in the ground with their tails, and having laid three hundred eggs in it, and covered them with their feet, expire; for they never live above six months and a half. Neither rains nor frost, however long and severe, can destroy their eggs; they continue till spring, and, hatched by the heat of the sun, the young locusts issue from the earth about the middle of April. From the circumstance of their young ones issuing from the ground, they are called *gob* or *gobai*, from an Arabic verb, which signifies to rise out of the earth. Another name is *gazam*, from the root *gazaz*, to cut off, or to spoil; and more destructive and insatiable spoilers were never let loose to desolate the earth. Pliny calls them a scourge in the hand of an incensed Deity. Wherever their innumerable bands direct their march, the verdure of the country, though it resembled before the paradise of God, almost instantaneously disappears. The trees and plants, stripped of their leaves, and reduced to their naked boughs and stems, cause the dreary image of winter to succeed in an instant to the rich scenery of spring; and the whole country puts on the appearance of being burnt. Fire itself devours not so fast; nor is a vestige of vegetation to be found when they again take their flight to produce similar disasters. In a few hours they eat up every green thing, and consign the miserable inhabitants of the desolated regions to inevitable famine. Many years are not sufficient to repair the desolation which these destructive insects produce. When they first appear on the frontiers of the cultivated lands, the husbandmen, if sufficiently numerous, sometimes divert the storm by their gestures and their cries, or they strive to repulse them by raising large clouds of smoke, but frequently their herbs and wet straw fail them; they then dig a variety of pits and trenches, all over their fields and gardens, which they fill with water, or with heath, stubble, and other combustible matter, which they set on fire upon the approach of the enemy. These methods of stopping their march are of great antiquity, for Homer familiarly refers to them as practised in his time. But they are all to no purpose, for the trenches are quickly filled, and the fires extinguished, by infinite swarms succeeding one another, and forming a bed on their fields of six or seven inches in thickness. Fire itself is not more active than these devourers; and not a trace of vegetation is to be discovered,

to Dakota. Parts of this region are fairly alive with the potato bug, cricket, or army grasshopper. In Montana a small grasshopper has destroyed every vestige of vegetation in the Gallatin Valley, one of the most productive regions of the territory. In Idaho, the crickets have made one of their occasional tours, being in several places as dense as ever was the Egyptian storm of locusts. But a field is preserved from the ravages of these pests by digging a trench around it, the base being narrow, then widening as it slopes upward. When the insects fall into this ditch they cannot crawl up its sides owing to its angle, and it is too deep for them to jump out, so that thousands of them perish in their prison from hunger. This same species of cricket has visited Eastern Oregon for the first time in many years, and has inflicted much injury on the crops. Millions upon millions seem to move together, being guided in their course by a common impulse. In their migrations they cross streams. I saw millions of them at one time in the Umatella River, they having apparently entered it with the intention of floating to fresh pastures. They

follow the course of the current, and on reaching tranquil water swim toward the shore and recommence their devastating work on the first edible vegetation they encounter. Their ravages in Eastern Oregon have been greater in Umatella county than elsewhere in the State, but, if they do not spread any further, the damage they can inflict must be comparatively small. The next pest in the West is the potato bug, an insect as vicious and destructive as any of its congeners, with this exception — that its taste is more limited. It devotes special attention to esculents, and these it devours with a rapidity and avidity that cannot be excelled by any winged creature in the universe; this bug is most numerous in Colorado, which seems to be its favouritehabitat, yet it is also a visitor to Illinois this year, where it is doing considerable injury. In Colorado it seems to have spread over a large area almost simultaneously, as if it sprung full-armed into life in each section. This would indicate that the ova from which the insects come are laid in the grass and hatched by the heat of the summer sun, and that the insects are not migratory like

when the cloud has resumed its flight But the two most powerful destroyers of these insects is the south, or south-easterly wind, and the bird called the *samarmar*. These birds, which greatly resemble the woodpecker, follow them in large flocks, greedily devour them, and besides kill as many as they can; they are therefore much respected by the peasants, and no person is ever allowed to destroy them. The southerly winds waft them over the Mediterranean, where they perish in so great quantities, that when their carcases are cast on the shore they infect the air for several days to a considerable distance. In a state of putrefaction, the stench emitted from their bodies is scarcely to be endured; the traveller, who crushes them below the wheels of his wagon, or the feet of his horses, is reduced to the necessity of washing his nose with vinegar, and holding his handkerchief, dipped in it, continually to his nostrils. One of the most grievous calamities ever inflicted by the locust happened to the regions of Africa, in the time of the Romans, and fell with peculiar weight on those parts which were subject to their empire. Scarcely recovered from the miseries of the last Punic war, Africa was doomed to suffer, about one hundred and twenty-three years before the birth of Christ, another desolation, as terrible as it was unprecedented. An immense number of locusts covered the whole country, consumed every plant and every blade of grass in the field, without sparing the roots, and the leaves of the trees, with the tendrils upon which they grew. These being exhausted, they penetrated with their teeth the bark, however bitter, and even corroded the dry and solid timber. After they had accomplished this terrible destruction, a sudden blast of wind dispersed them into different portions, and after tossing them awhile in the air, plunged their innumerable hosts into the sea. But the deadly scourge was not then at an end; the raging billows threw up enormous heaps of their dead and corrupted bodies upon that long-extended coast, which produced a most insupportable and poisonous stench. This soon brought on a pestilence, which affected every species of animals; so that birds, and sheep, and cattle, and even the wild beasts of the field, perished in great numbers; and their carcases, being soon rendered putrid by the foulness of the air, added greatly to the general corruption. The destruction of the human species was horrible; in Numidia, where at that time Micipsa was king, eighty thousand persons died; and in that part of the sea coast which bordered upon the region of Carthage and Utica, two hundred thousand are said to have been carried off by this pestilence. When Le Bruyn was at Rama he was informed that the locusts were once so destructive there that in the space of two hours they ate up all the herbage round the town; and in the garden belonging to the house in which he lodged, they ate the very stalks of the artichoke down to the ground. This statement will show that the locust is one of the most terrible instruments in the hand of incensed Heaven: it will discover the reason that the inspired writers, in denouncing His judgments, so frequently allude to this insect, and threaten the sinner with its vengeance; it accounts, in the most satisfactory manner, for the figures which the Prophets borrow, when they describe the march of cruel and destructive armies, from the character and habits of this creature. The narratives of Volney, Thevenot,

and other travellers, who have seen and described the innumerable swarms of the locusts, and their wasteful ravages, fully confirm the glowing description of Joel and other inspired Prophets, as seen by reference to their writings. "A nation," says Joel, "has come up upon my land, strong and without number. He has laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree; he has made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white; the vine is dried up, and the fig tree languishes, the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered; because joy is withered away from the sons of men." "A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth. They march every one in his ways; they do not break their ranks, neither does one thrust another. The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness." "They shall run up the wall; they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter into the windows like a thief. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble, the sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." The same allusion is involved in these words of Nahum, concerning the fall of the Assyrian empire: "Thy crowned are as the locusts: and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth, they flee away, and their place is not known." Bochart and other writers, who are best acquainted with the Eastern countries, mention a great variety of locusts, which vindicates the language of the Prophet: "Thy captains are as the great grasshoppers." The next clause is attended with some difficulty. Mr. Lowth, in his comment, supposes that these insects flee away to avoid the heat of the sun; and it has been queried whether the phrase cold day, does not mean the night. But it is well known that the heat of the sun, instead of compelling the locusts to retire, quickens them into life and activity; and the words cold day, we believe, are never used in Scripture, nor by any writer of value, to signify the night. The Prophet evidently refers, not to their flight during the heat of the day, but to the time of their total departure; for he does not speak of their moving from one field to another, but of their leaving the country which they have invaded, so completely that the place of their retreat is not known. The day of cold cannot mean the depth of winter, for they do not make their appearance in Palestine at that season; and although in Arabia, from whence Fulcherius supposes they come, thickets are found in some places, and it has been imagined that the locusts lie concealed in them during the winter, which may be thought to be their camping in the hedges in the cold day; yet it is to be observed that the word translated hedges, properly signifies, not living fences, but stone walls, and therefore cannot with propriety be applied to thickets. But if the locust appears in the months of April and May, the phrase "cold day" may seem to be improperly chosen. This difficulty, which may be thought a considerable one, arises entirely from our translation. The original term, *karah*, denotes both cold and cooling; and the difficulty vanishes when the latter is introduced, and the words are translated, the day of cooling, or the time when the Orientals

the grasshopper, or at least that their range is far more limited. They are extensive enough, however, in the American Switzerland, and their work will inflict much damage on the farmers. The grasshoppers are, however, the great plague of the country They have been more destructive to crops in Minnesota and Iowa than all the raids made into these States by the Indians during the past ten years. A rough guess would place the destruction of wheat alone in Minnesota at 1,500,000 bushels. This would make the loss in wheat amount to one and a quarter million dollars, and as much more, perhaps, for the other cereals would, together, give about the estimate of the monetary damage to Minnesota. Iowa has probably suffered the same loss, or very near it; while an eighth of a million dollars, or perhaps less, will make up the amount of injury done to Nebraska. Along the line of the Union Pacific Railroad they have devoured the leaves of every corn-stalk, so that the fields present a most dilapidated appearance. I saw a shower of these insects falling near the town of Freemont, and can only compare it to a dense snowstorm.

comparison not inappropriate, as their wings are white. When the train attempted to move on it was prevented by the numbers crushed by the wheels, as they made the track so slippery

a "The Prophet had declared that the earth and the animal and vegetable kingdoms are involved in suffering for man's sin; and he now reveals the joyful truth that they will be renewed in God's mercy, on man's repentance and faith. Comp. Ho. ii. 21—23; Ro. viii. 19—22."—*Wordsworth.*
b Ps. lxvii. 6; Zec. viii. 12.
v. 21. *Alexander Shanks*, 177.
v. 22. *J. Milner*, i. 104.
c Campbell.

a Comp. Je. x. 23, xxx. 11.

"After the fast, and the prayer, and the repentance, it is in accordance with the righteousness of God, who repents Him of the evil, that He should send the rains."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The effect of the seasonable rains shall be abundance of all articles of food."—*Fausset.*

vv. 23, 24. *Dr. M. Hole*, ii. 72.

v. 25. *C. E. Kennaway*, 230.

c Dr. Thomas.

open their windows with the view of refrigerating their houses, or to retreat from the oppressive heats, which commence in the months of April and May, to the cooling shades of their gardens. A derivative of this term is employed by the sacred historian to denote the refrigeratory or summer parlour, which Eglon, the king of Moab, occupied when Ehud presented the tribute of his nation.

21, 22. (21) **O land**, or *O earth.* Reference is to the fields, etc., wh. had borne the weight of Divine judgment.[a] **great things**, in the way of deliverance and restoration. (22) **do spring**, start growing again after the time of desolation: see ch. i. 19. **their strength**, in rich and abundant fruitage.[b]

Golden harvest of autumn.—

Autumn! and the red sun through mottled clouds,
Like fire-bark through blue waves, his passage cleaves;
In ripening raiment all the orchard shrouds,
And gilds with glory all the saffron sheaves.
The wind, swift handmaid of the harvest field,
Curling the yellow tresses of the corn,
Brings, on the breaking silence of the morn,
The reapers' song. Lo! where they wildly wield
Their glittering sickles, brandish'd high in air,
Ere they begin their merry toil! and now
The shout is hushed into a murmur low:
The sun advancing from his cloud-girt lair,
Chases from sorest hearts sad dreams of night,
For darkest waters will reflect his light.[c]

23—25. (23) **children of Zion**, or of Judah; for Joel was a prophet of the *southern* kingdom. **former rain**, wh. fell in autumn, about October. **moderately**, *Heb.* "according to righteouness;"[a] in measures of gracious adaptation. **latter rain**, wh. fell three months before harvest, about March. **first month**, better, first place, or before the outpouring of the Spirit, *v.* 28. (24) **floors**, *i.e.* the threshing-floors. **vats**, *i.e.* vats into wh. the wine and oil were pressed.[b] (25) **locust**, *etc.*, ch. i. 4.

Twofold restoration (*vv.* 25—27).—These words refer to a twofold restoration. I. The restoration of lost material mercies. 1. By giving the same in kind as in the case of Job; 2. By bestowing that which answers to the same purpose. II. The restoration of lost religious privileges. 1. Worship; 2. Communion.[c]

The former and latter rain (*v.* 23).—In southern climates rain comes at particular seasons, which are generally termed the rainy seasons. The rain seldom continues to fall long at one time even then, but rather falls in what may be called thundershowers, and in torrents. If the ground happens to be hard, which it generally is, such a short, though plentiful fall of rain, does little service to the land, as it runs off immediately, not having time to soften and sink into the ground; afterward the powerful heat of the sun, soon breaking forth from behind the clouds, draws up the little damp that has been left, which soon rehardens the surface of the ground, and renders it as impervious as before, so that succeeding showers are rendered almost useless; but rain falling moderately, as promised in the text, gradually

penetrates the ground, and prepares it to retain future showers, which process produces fertility.[d]

26, 27. (26) be satisfied, *comp.* Le. xxvi. 5, 26. be ashamed, by reason of disappointed hopes of harvest. This caused shame because it was a sure sign of their Lord's displeasure. (27) none else, *i.e.* no other supposed god has any claim to your allegiance.[a]

The courage and confidence of God's people (*v.* 26).—I. The nature and grounds of that confidence under which they shall never be moved. 1. They rest on the strong arm of Omnipotence ; 2. They build on a firm foundation ; 3. They have the promises ; 4. The anchor of hope. II. The effect of this godly boldness and confidence. 1. Note the effect of the opposite quality ; 2. The godly have a state of peace ; 3. They stand up for the cause of God.[b]

Courage in lowly places.—Go ask God's angels where they see the most courage. Not at the cannon's mouth ; not at the hilted sword. Go see the saintly Christian mother that, for the space of twenty years, has suffered days and nights of pain, in order to give, literally, her life for her children. Left, when her husband died, a widow, in extreme poverty, she determines, by the love she bore him, as well as by the love she bears them, that they shall grow up to intelligence and education ; and through toiling pain, as much as martyrs feel at the stake, by day and by night, willingly, in long months—Oh ! how long the year is to misery ! —she has given herself to these children. And now, one by one, as they have come upon the stage, in answer to her heroic efforts, they are prospered. But the sands are running out. She has used herself up. And at that time when woman should become matron, and, after all her suffering and shattering, should begin to be serene and happy, her forces are failing ; and in poverty she is dying. She looks back upon her whole life, and there has never been a day that has not been bitter. There has never been a day in which she could have lived if she had not believed in God ; and now she is dying. Ask God's angels if there is any hero on the battle-field that is so heroic as this poor spent Christian, that is dying, and glad to die, that has literally poured her life out like a cup of bitterness and pain for other people.—*Bravery in reproving sin.*—A merchant and shipowner of New York was standing at the entrance of his warehouses, conversing with a gentleman on business. A pious sailor belonging to one of his vessels came to the warehouse to enter it, but observing that the door was occupied, modestly stepped aside, not willing to interrupt the conversation. While waiting there, he heard the name of Jesus profanely used ; and, on turning to look, he observed that it was his employer who was speaking. Instantly changing his position, and standing in front of the gentleman, with his head uncovered, and his hat under his arm, he addressed the merchant in this language, "Sir, will you excuse me if I speak a word to you?" The gentleman, recognising him as one of the crew of his vessel recently arrived, and supposing he might have something to say about the business of the ship, told him to speak on. "You won't be offended, then, sir, with a poor ignorant sailor, if he tells you his feelings?" said he. "Certainly not," replied the merchant. "Well, then, sir," said the sailor, with much feeling, "will you be so kind as not to take the name

d Campbell.

a Eze. xxxvii. 26, 27, xxxix. 22 ; Zep. iii. 15, 17. *v.* 26. *Alexander Shanks*, 406 ; *W. N. Darnell*, 211.

b W. Stone, M.A.

"True courage is not the brutal force of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve of virtue and of reason. He who thinks without their aid to shine in deeds of arms builds on a sandy basis his renown ; a dream, a vapour, or an ague fit, may make a coward of him."—*Whitehead.*

"He's truly valiant that can wisely suffer the worst that man can breathe, and make his wrongs his outsides ; to wear them like his raiment, carelessly ; and ne'er prefer his injuries to his heart, to bring it into danger."—*Shakespeare.*

"True courage is not moved by breath of words, while the rash bravery of boiling blood impetuous, knows no settled principle. A fev'rish tide, it has its ebbs and flows, as spirits rise or fall, as wine inflames, or circumstances change ; but inborn courage, the gen'rous child of Fortitude and Faith, holds its firm empire in the constant soul, and like the steadfast pole-star, never once from the same fix'd and faithful point declines."—*Hannah More.*

"Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul; and there I see such black and grained spots as will not leave their tinct."—*Shakespeare.*

of my blessed Jesus in vain? He is a good Saviour. He took my feet out of 'the horrible pit and miry clay, and established my goings.' O sir! don't, if you please, take the name of my Master, the Lord Jesus, in vain. He is your Creator as well as mine; and He has made you, and preserves you, and is always doing you good." This was said with so much earnestness and feeling, that the gentleman was quite touched. His eyes filled with tears, and he said, "My good fellow, God helping me, I will never again take the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour, in vain." "Thank you, sir," said the honest tar; and, putting on his hat, he went away to his work.

28, 29. (28) **afterward**, in the last days;[a] in the Messianic times. The immediate temporal blessings were to be the sign of the future spiritual blessings. **pour . . spirit**, the gift of the Spirit is presented under the figure of refreshing rains,[b] wh. is used in the previous verses. As the Divine Spirit had been given to Prophets in the older dispensation, so it should be given to all in the new. **dreams**, *etc.*, the various modes of Divine communication previously given.[c] (29) **servants**, *etc.*, the new grace would be set under no class restrictions. To the *poor* the Gospel was preached; and upon the *slaves* the Divine Spirit came.[d]

The new dispensation (*v.* 28).—The properties of the Gospel dispensation are—I. Spirituality. 1. Will pour out of My Spirit; 2. Power—your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; 3. Liberty—in Jerusalem shall be deliverance; 4. Expansiveness—all flesh.[e]—*The Gospel dispensation* (*v.* 28).—The Gospel dispensation was to be characterised—I. By spirituality. 1. Formerly the Spirit dwelt with men; 2. Now He dwells in them. II. By liberty. 1. The Gospel finds us in chains; 2. It bursts our bonds asunder. III. Power. 1. Marvellous spiritual signs; 2. Stupendous physical wonders. IV. Expansiveness. 1. Its salvation is universally free; 2. Its conditions are level to all capacities; 3. It triumphs over all conventionalities.[f]

The two dispensations.—If the glorious things of God are seen by us, as St. Paul saith, but darkly in the glass of faith, yet hath this glass a concentrating power which makes their rays converge into one point, and play upon our innermost soul, with a warning, as well as a brightening, influence; and the difference between us and those of the older dispensation is briefly this, that the revelation of a final state, wherein God should be the soul's full possession, shone to them as a distant light in a dark place, towards which indeed they might direct their course, but by which they could hardly guide their steps; whereas to us it is a lamp, as well as a beacon, the cheerer, as well as the aim, of our toilsome pilgrimage. And then at last will come that final state of blessedness, when faith and hope will be entirely swallowed up in boundless and endless charity; when the "light intellectual full of love" shall reabsorb and quench, in its peerless brightness, the scattered beams it had before suffered to wander upon earth; when every other good and holy thing shall melt and be transmuted in that one assimilating, unifying essence; and, like dewdrops which have refreshed us in the morning, and then have been caught up by some heaving swell of the ocean tide, though small and imperfect, shall become the elements of the unlimited and eternal. We, thus, are placed in a middle state between one past and one that is yet to come, a

[a] Ac. ii. 17.

[b] Is. xliv. 3; Eze. xxxix. 29.

[c] "Prophecy, visions, dreams, are naturally selected by Joel as being the recognised forms of the manifestation of the Spirit under the Old Testament."—*Spk. Com.*

[d] Ga. iii. 28; Co. iii. 11.

[e] *vv.* 28, 29. *R. Southgate*, ii. 380; *W. Gilpin*, 349.

[f] *W. W. Whythe.*

[f] *J. A. Macdonald.* "As to the Christian religion, besides the strong evidence which we have for it, there is a balance in its favour from the number of great men who have been convinced of its truth after a serious consideration of the question. Grotius was an acute man, a lawyer, a man accustomed to examine evidence, and he was convinced. Grotius was not a recluse, but a man of the world, who certainly had no bias on the side of religion. Sir Isaac Newton set out an infidel, and came to be a very firm believer."—*Dr. Johnson.*

state necessarily intended as the completion of the former, and as a preparation for the latter, whereof the type is shadowed forth in that which hath preceded, while itself is the emblem and fair image of that which shall follow. Now, this position must give rise to many interesting analogies; forasmuch as all things, being thus in unbroken progress from the beginning to the end of God's dispensations, without violent shocks or sudden changes, we must expect to find in the present order or state such qualities and dispositions as may suit this its twofold character, that is to say, perfective of a former, and initatory of a future state. And even as a skilful geometer shall, by the accurate measurement of a shadow, under certain conditions, tell you exactly the height and proportions of the object which projects it, and, again, from the survey of this, shall define what the other should at any time be, so may we by a diligent study of those two other dispensations as well as of our own, the one whereof we are the fulfilment, the other whereof we are the figure, arrive at much important knowledge regarding the condition of our present state.[g]

Such a string of pearls, I think, were never put around the neck of any favourite, as Christ put around the neck of His disciples, when He pronounced the Beatitudes.

g Cardinal Wiseman.

30—32. (30) **wonders**, *etc.*, "these figures chiefly symbolise political revolutions, and changes in the ruling powers of the world."[a] (31) **sun . . blood**,[b] these figures denote the melancholy condition of public affairs previous to the destruction of Jerusalem. There may also be intended a reference to the time of general judgment. (32) **whosoever**, *etc.*, Ro. x. 13. **and in Jerusalem**, *comp.* Lu. xxiv. 47. **remnant**, poss. referring to the Christians who escaped at the time of the siege of Jerusalem.

Hallowing effects of daybreak.—

What soul was his when from the naked top
Of some bold headland he beheld the sun
Rise up and bathe the world in light! He look'd—
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass, beneath him lay
In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces did he read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle; sensation, soul, and form
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.

In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the Living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired;
No thanks he breathed, he proffer'd no request
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power
That made him; it was blessedness and love![c]

a "We have two kinds of sirocco, one accompanied with vehement wind, which fills the air with dust and fine sand. I have often seen the whole heavens veiled in gloom with this sort of sand-cloud, through which the sun, shorn of his beams, looked like a globe of dull smouldering fire. It may have been this phenomenon wh. suggested that strong prophetic fig. of Joel. The pillars of smoke are probably those columns of sand and dust raised high in the air by local whirlwinds, wh. often accompany the sirocco."—*Thomson.*

b Mat. xxiv. 29; Mk. xiii. 24; Lu. xxi. 25; Re. vi. 12.

c Wordsworth.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—3. (1) **those days,** "the first picture of the coming golden age, as it is drawn for us by a Hebrew prophet." **bring again,** this is usually referred to a restoration of the Jews wh. is yet to be accomplished.[a] (2) **all nations,** hostile nations, enemies of God's Church. **valley of Jehoshaphat,** or the valley of Divine judgment, such as was revealed in the days of Jehoshaphat.[b] **plead,** *see* Is. lxvi. 16; Eze. xxxviii. 22. **parted my land,** this was done by the Chaldæans and Romans. (3) **cast lots,** Na. iii. 10. **boy,** *etc.*, "during the Jewish war Titus took 97,000 prisoners, of whom he publicly sold all that were under 17 years of age."[c]

The persecution of good men (*v.* 1).—There have ever been good men on the earth. 1. They are called My people; 2. My heritage. II. They have generally been subject to persecution. III. Their persecution will be avenged by heaven.[d]

The resurrection.—Those spiritualising Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans, who wrest this passage, like a thousand others of the Scriptures, from a literal to a mystical sense, insist on its applying to the resurrection of the dead on the last great day. From this belief the modern Jews, whose fathers are thought, by some of the most learned, to have had no idea of a resurrection, or a future state, have their bones deposited in the valley of Jehoshaphat. From the same hope the Mohammedans have left a stone jutting out of the eastern wall of Jerusalem, for the accommodation of their prophet, who, they insist, is to sit on it here, and call the whole world from below to judgment. And a late traveller, with the staff of a Christian pilgrim, after summoning up all the images of desolation which the place presents, but without once thinking of the contemptible size of this theatre for so grand a display, says, one might say that the trumpet of judgment had already sounded, and that the dead were about to rise in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Chateaubriand).[e]

4—6. (4) **what . . Palestine?**[a] *i.e.* "Why do ye too, even now, harass My people?" (5) **my silver,** Mine because belonging to My people. Reference may also be to the plundering of the temple. (6) **the Grecians,** or people of Javan;[b] Ionians, a Greek colony on the coast of Asia Minor, who were the first Greeks known to the Jews. "It is said particularly of Javan (*i.e.* Greece), that they dealt in that sort of traffic, the buying and selling of slaves."[c]

Slavery (*v.* 3).—Morgan, in his *History of Algiers*, gives us such an account of the unfortunate expedition of the Emperor Charles V. against that city, so far resembling a passage of the Prophet Joel as to induce me to transcribe it into these papers. That author tells us, that besides vast multitudes that were butchered by the Moors and the Arabs, a great number were made captives, mostly by the Turks and citizens of Algiers; and some of them, in order to turn this misfortune into a most bitter, taunting, and contemptuous jest, parted with their new-made slaves for an onion apiece. "Often have I heard," says he, "Turks and Africans upbraiding Europeans with this disaster, saying, scornfully, to such as have seemed to hold their heads somewhat loftily, 'What! have you forgot the time when a

a "The Prophet comprises the whole redemption, beginning from the return out of Babylon, then continued from the first advent of Christ down to the last day (His second advent) when God will restore His Church to perfect felicity."—*Calvin.*
Je. xxx. 3.
b 2 Chr. xx. "There is no reference to the valley close beside Jerusalem which has been thus named. At what period the name was first applied to that spot is not known; there is no trace of it in the Bible or Josephus."—*Grove.*
c "After Hadrian's Jewish war four Jews were sold for a measure of barley at Hebron."—*Spk. Com.*
d Dr. Thomas.
e Buckingham.
a "These were some of the Jews' evil neighbours, who took all occasions to distress them."—*Lowth.*
b Gen. x. 2, 4.
c Eze. xxvii. 13. "*Movers* gives many instances of early slave dealing on the part both of Tyrians and of Greeks."—*Spk. Com.*

Christian at Algiers was scarce worth an onion?' The treatment of the Jewish people by the heathen nations, which the Prophet Joel has described, was, in like manner, contemptuous and bitterly sarcastic: 'They have cast lots for My people, and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.' Joel iii. 3. They that know the large sums that are wont to be paid, in the East, for young slaves of either sex, must be sensible that the Prophet designs, in these words, to point out the extreme contempt in which these heathen nations held the Jewish people. Considered as slaves are in the East, they are sometimes purchased at a very low price. Joel complains of the contemptuous cheapness in which the Israelites were held by those who made them captives. 'They cast lots for My people, and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.' On this passage Chardin remarks, that 'the Tartars, Turks, and Cossacks, sell the children sometimes as cheap, which they take. Not only has this been done in Asia, where examples of it are frequent; our Europe has seen such desolations. When the Tartars came into Poland they carried off all they were able. I went thither some years after. Many persons of the court assured me that the Tartars, perceiving that they would no more redeem those that they had carried off, sold them for a crown, and that they had purchased them for that sum. In Mingrelia they sell them for provisions, and for wine.'"[d]

"Liberty of conscience is the free right of adopting and enjoying opinions on religious subjects, and of being allowed to worship the Supreme Being according to the dictates of conscience, unfettered by external control."—*Maunder.*

"'Tis liberty alone that gives the flowers of fleeting life their lustre and perfume, and we are weeds without it."—*Cowper.*

d Harmer.

7, 8. (7) **raise them,** by restoring either them or their posterity. (8) **sell your sons,** this was fulfilled when, at the taking of Tyre, Alexander sold 30,000 of the inhabitants for slaves; at the same time Gaza, a town on the coast of Palestine, was sacked, and the women and children sold for slaves.[a] **Sabeans,** people of Sheba, at the remote extremity of Arabia Felix.[b]

Slavery.—Is a man free, just because there are no fetters on his limbs, and he is not the inmate of a prison? Call you a despot necessarily free, because his will is law, and there is none to control him in a single purpose or a single desire? You know better than this. You know that there is often immeasurably more of freedom with the slave than with the tyrant, with the captive than with the jailer. There are fetters of the spirit, there are mental chains, forged of such material, and fastened with such strength, that he who wears them may sit upon a throne, and be unspeakably more a bondsman than many a wretched thing that is bound in a dungeon. An exiled king had learned this truth; for James II., on his death-bed, thus addressed his son: "There is no slavery like sin, and no liberty like God's service." Was not the dethroned monarch right? What think you of the fetters of bad habits? What think you of the chains of indulged lust? The drunkard who cannot resist the craving for the wine, know you a more thorough captive? The covetous man, who toils night and day for wealth, what is he but a slave? The sensual man, the ambitious man, the worldly man—those who, in spite of the remonstrances of conscience, cannot break away from enthralment—what are they, if not the subjects of a tyranny than which there is none sterner, and none more degrading?[c]

a Lowth.

b Je. vi. 20; Eze. xxiii. 42.

"Spiritual liberty consists in freedom from the curse of the moral law; from the servitude of the ritual; from the love, power, and guilt of sin; from the dominion of Satan; from the corruption of the world; from the fear of death and the wrath to come."—*C. Buck.*

"When liberty is gone, life grows insipid, and has lost its relish."—*Addison.*

c H. Melvill.

9, 10. (9) **proclaim,** *etc.*, the Prophet returns to those nations

a Zec. xiv. 2, 3.

referred to in *v.* 2. They are now called to the battle in wh. they are to be overthrown.[a] (10) **beat**, *etc.*, comp. Is. ii. 4. **pruninghooks**, the sickles; not, as marg., *the scythe*, an instrument quite unknown in the East. **am strong**, the general rage against God's people would lead even the weak and the aged to join the army.

Retribution (*v.* 9).—In this retribution we note—I. The greatest resistance absolutely futile. II. The greatest multitudes assembled together. III. The greatest propriety displayed in the whole. IV. The greatest awfulness displayed.[b]

The Syrian plough (*v.* 10).—The Syrian plough, which was probably used in all the regions around, is a very simple frame, and commonly so light, that a man of moderate strength might carry it in one hand. Volney states that in Syria it is often nothing else than the branch of a tree, cut below a bifurcation, and used without wheels. It is drawn by asses and cows, seldom by oxen. And Dr. Russel informs us, the ploughing of Syria is performed often by a little cow, at most with two, and sometimes only by an ass. In Persia it is, for the most part, drawn by one ox only, and not unfrequently even by an ass, although it is more ponderous than in Palestine. With such an imperfect instrument the Syrian husbandman can do little more than scratch the surface of his field, or clear away the stones or weeds that encumber it, and prevent the seed from reaching the soil. The ploughshare is a "piece of iron, broad, but not large, which tips the end of the shaft." So much does it resemble the short sword used by the ancient warriors, that it may, with very little trouble, be converted into that deadly weapon; and when the work of destruction is over, reduced again to its former shape, and applied to the purpose of agriculture. In allusion to the first operation, the Prophet Joel summons the nations to leave their peaceful employments in the cultivated field, and buckle on their armour: "Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears." This beautiful image the Prophet Isaiah has reversed, and applied to the establishment of that profound and lasting peace which is to bless the Church of Christ in the latter days: "And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."[c]

11, 12. (11) **assemble**, better, *hurry*. **thy mighty ones**, prob. here the angels who are to discomfit this great host. Others think there is reference to the mighty ones of the hostile army, who are esp. to feel the overwhelming power of God. (12) **there**, not in the valley near Jerusalem, but in the ideal spot named in *v.* 2 the valley of Jehoshaphat.[a]

Valley of Jehoshaphat.—This valley, running from north to south, between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, is a little more than a mile long. Its greatest breadth is supposed to be from 150 to 200 yards, but in other places it is only a deep, narrow ravine. The bottom is ordinarily dry, excepting after heavy rains. The valley is rocky on both sides, and abounds in sepulchres of various shapes and sizes, with only a few scattered olives to relieve the eye. For nearly three thousand years it has been used as a place of burial by Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians. In addition to the tombs of kings and patriarchs, there are tens of thousands of stones, the only memorials of the

"The word *prepare* war, is lit. *sanctify* war, bec. the heathen always began war with religious ceremonies."—*Fausset.*

b Dr. Thomas.

"An hour and a half beyond the bridge we gained the road from Jaffa to Ramleh. The country had now become generally cultivated, the husbandry good, the crops and fallows clean. Upon a space of ten or twelve acres I observed fourteen ploughs at work; and so simple and light is the construction of these implements, that the husbandman, when returning from his labour in the evening, takes his plough home upon his shoulder, and carries it to the field again in the morning. The share is of wood, and armed only at the end with a tooth, or point of iron. The beam is very slender, as well as the rude handle by which it is directed."—*Munroe's "Summer Ramble in Syria."*

c Paxton.

a "The Mohammedans have borrowed from the Jews a tradition, which locates the judgment in the Kidron, or valley of Jehoshaphat."—*Porter.*

"Thus the soul, standing within the great cathedral of God's material world, and looking through it upward to the light, beholds the

mighty dead. Thither persons repair from all parts of the world, to seek from the Turks a last resting-place for their bodies, even though it be at great cost, believing that Christ will there appear in judgment. "The valley is divided into three parts, of which the northern is called the Valley of Kedron; the middle the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and the southern the Valley of Siloam, from the fountain of that name on the one side, and the village on the o her. These three names are also applied, respectively, to the whole extent of the valley, but that of the Valley of Siloam less frequently than the other two." It is also called the King's Dale (2 Sam. xviii. 18), and the Vale of Shaveh (Gen. xiv. 17).[b]

13, 14. (13) **put . . sickle**, Re. xiv. 15.[a] **harvest is ripe**, *i.e.* the wickedness of the wicked is come to a head, and demands Divine interference. (14) **valley of decision**, or of "cutting to pieces;"[b] or of "sharp judgment."

The ingathering of the corn (*v.* 13).—I. The duties the ingatherers owe to themselves. 1. Refrain from intemperance and excess; 2. Nevertheless, rejoice with a holy joy. II. The duties you owe to others. 1. Urge attention to the laws of equity and love; 2. Be guardful of language; 3. Think of the poor. III. The duties you owe to God. 1. Gratitude; 2. Seek the glory of God in the harvest field.[c]

Valley of Jehoshaphat.—Wilson, in the *Lands of the Bible*, says: "One of the most picturesque, and, at the same time, deeply interesting scenes, is the Valley of Jehoshaphat viewed from the brow of the hill descending from the high places of Tophet. There is a magnificence in its outlining which lives in the memory. It cannot be forgotten. The bed of the brook Kedron lies along the lowest part of it; and on either side, fig, olive, and pomegranate trees cast a lovely shade; while gardens of melons and cucumbers give an idea of fresh luxuriance. On either side of the valley the heights are terraced, and in some places slightly cultivated, and the breadth of the valley is very bold and striking. Independent of all the heart-stirring associations which Scripture narrative gives rise to, the Valley of Jehoshaphat, viewed from south to north, on the east side of the city, is a scene in which a gifted painter would luxuriate. On the right slope, north of En-rogel, and formed by the meeting of the valleys of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat, are the best cultivated gardens near Jerusalem, and undoubtedly those mentioned in Scripture by the name of King's Garden. The present gardens are watered by channels and streamlets from the Pool of Siloam. Their trees and kitchen vegetables are of the finest quality. Close upon the gardens there is an aged mulberry tree, surrounded by a stone terrace which, it is said, marks the spot where the Prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder."

15—17. (15) **sun . . darkened**, ch. ii. 31. (16) **roar**, as a lion.[a] **hope . . people**, *Heb.* "Place of repair, or harbour;" their refuge. (17) **holy**, consecrated entirely to God. **strangers . . more**, *comp.* Is. xxxv. 8; Je. xxx. 8; Ob. 17; Re. xxi. 27.

Description of daybreak.—

The stars burnt out in the pale blue air,
And the thin white moon lay withering there,

meaning of its forms and colours; but standing without, and studying Nature in detail, not with reference to light pouring through it from God, but for itself alone, there is nothing better seen than the mere material enamelling."—*Dr. Cheever.*

b Meen.

a Mat. xiii. 30—39.

b "Like sheaves crushed on the threshing-floor by the sharp toothed instrument which was formed with revolving cylinders, and by which they were threshed."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 13. *B. E. Nicholls*, ii. 400.
v. 14. *J. Parry*, 196; *J. C. M. Bellew*, i. 109.

c H. A. Herbert, B.A.
"Nature shall make me careful of myself, but hateful to none: reason shall make me wise for myself, but harmless to all; religion shall make me loving to all, but not careless of myself. I may hear the former, I will hearken only to the latter. I subscribe to some things in all, to all things in religon."—*Warwick.*

a Je. xxv. 30; Am. i. 2, iii. 8.

"How often have I paused on every charm,—the sheltered cot, the cultivated farm, the never-failing brook, the busy

mill, the decent church that topt the neighbouring hill, the hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade, for talking age and whispering lovers made." —*Goldsmith.*

"From the dread summit of this chalky bourn, look up a-height; the shrill-gorged lark so far cannot be seen or heard." —*Ibid.*

b Shelley.

To tower, and cavern, and rift, and tree,
The owl and the bat fled drowsily.
Day had kindled the dewy woods
And the rocks above and the stream below,
And the vapours in their multitudes,
And the Apennines' shroud of summer snow,
And clothed with light of aery gold
The mists in their eastern eaves uprolled.

Day had awakened all things that be,
The lark and the thrush and the swallow free;
And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,
And the matin-bell and the mountain bee:
Fireflies were quench'd on the dewy corn,
Glow-worms went out on the river's brim,
Like lamps which a student forgets to trim:
The beetle forgot to wind his horn,
The crickets were still in the meadow and hill:
Like a flock of rooks at a farmer's gun,
Night's dreams and terrors, every one,
Fled from the brains which are their prey,
From the lamp's death to the morning ray.[b]

18—21. (18) drop, *etc.*, comp. Am. ix. 13. Figurative for abundance of vines grown on the terraced hill-sides. fountain, *etc.*, characteristic of a time of peace.[a] Shittim, or *acacia*. (19) Egypt and Edom, types of the enemies of Israel. (20) Judah . . ever, this is true if regarded spiritually, and Judah be put for the Church of God in the world. (21) cleanse, by My holy avengings in the great day.

God and the Church (*v.* 21).—I. The Church is the greatest witness for God. 1. As decidedly opposed to the principles and practices of the great mass of mankind; 2. A great proportion of mankind have in every age opposed the Church; 3. Still the Church has not only existed but increased. II. The Church is the brightest revelation of God. 1. By publishing God's own revelations; 2. By imitating His moral perfections. III. The Church is the highest instrument of God. 1. It ameliorates the outward sufferings of the world; 2. It converts the moral heart of the world.[b]

Edom.—"Our conductor preceded us, calling our attention to some large slabs, traces of an ancient pavement, by which the labour of man had converted this abrupt and wild ravine into a magnificent avenue. After many windings in the midst of this almost subterranean street (so near do the summits of the rocks above approach each other), we were arrested by a prospect which it were vain to attempt to describe. Our view is taken from the entry of the ravine. Two Arabs, with their camels, are seen in the foreground, advancing towards the city of Selah or Petra, the magnificent ruins of which, seen in the distance, fully exemplify the prophetic denunciation—'Edom shall be a desolation' (Joel iii. 19). A grand triumphal arch raised at this spot, such as the ancients were accustomed to construct at the approaches of cities, boldly connects together these two great walls of rocks. The impression produced by it is very imposing at the moment the traveller enters this kind of covered way."

a Zec. xiv. 8; Re. xxii. 1.

"The novel disposition of this triumphal arch led M. de Laborde at first to think that it might have served both as a passage from one side of the rocks to another, and also as a channel for conveying part of the waters of an aqueduct, which was carried along the ravine. He ascended by a steep opening encumbered with rocks; but after reaching the summit with difficulty, he found nothing which could authorise the supposition that this arch was destined for any other use than that of adorning the approaches to the capital of Arabia Petræa."—*Horne.*

b Caleb Morris.

AMOS.

Introduction.

I. Author. Amos, = *borne up, or burden;* a native of Tekoah, a small town of Judah, ab. 12 ms. S. of Jerusalem; at least, this was his ordinary dwelling-place. He was not trained in the prophetic schools, and is said to have been among the herdmen of Tekoah (i. 1); he also describes himself as a keeper of cattle and a gatherer of sycamore fruit, and says that he was taken from the flock (vii. 14, 15): but though this seems to indicate a mean condition, and none but the poorest (we are told by travellers) now gather or use sycamore fruit in Palestine (*see Thomson, Land and Book*, 23), yet it does not follow that Amos was uneducated—a mere working man. David was taken from the sheepfolds; and the word used in Am. i. 1 is the same that is applied to Mesha, the tributary king of Moab (2 Kings iii. 4). **II. Time.** (B.C. 810—785.) We only know that Amos must have prophesied somewhere during the last part of the reign of Jeroboam II., when he was contemporary with Uzziah. The very specific date, "two years before the earthquake," indicates that his whole mission to Israel was executed within a single year, perhaps within a few months. It seems to have been after his return to Judah, when at least two years had elapsed, that he collected his prophecies and put them into their present form. **III. Style.** It has not the flowing fulness of Joel, but charms the reader by its freshness and simplicity. His writings abound in images taken from rural scenes and employments, some of which are very unique and striking in their character. The composition would seem to show that Amos was not a coarse rustic, but a person of considerable attainments. His book is cited twice in the New Testament (Acts vii. 42, 43, xv. 15, 17).

Synopsis.

This Book may be divided into Two principal Parts.

PART I.—Plain Declarations.....i.—vi.

This portion comprises a denunciation of the sins of adjacent nations...i. 1—ii. 30

And a reproof of Judah and Israel ii. 4—vi. 14

PART II.—Prophetic Visions and Symbolic Announcements .....vii.—ix.

The impending judgments are here presignified.....vii. 1—ix. 10

Which Amaziah, the idolatrous priest, misrepresents; and finally consolatory promises are given .....ix. 11—15

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1, 2. (1) **words of,** *comp.* Je. i. 1. **Amos,**="borne up, or a burden." The earliest of the Prophets after Jonah. Though a native of Judah, his prophecies chiefly bear reference to the northern kingdom. **herdmen,** or shepherds; the term used appears to indicate his care of a particular breed of sheep.[a] **Tekoa,** six miles S. from Bethlehem. **earthquake,** Zec. xiv. 5.[b] (2) **roar,** Joel iii. 16. **habitations,** *etc.*,[c] *i.e.* the south country, the chief part for flocks. **top,** or headland. The Prophet intimates thus that the *whole land* from south to north shall suffer under the judgments.

A sketch of Amos (*v.* 1).—I. The sphere of life in which he moved. 1. Worldly pride Divinely rebuked; 2. Human nature Divinely honoured. II. The age in which he lived. 1. The political event of this period; 2. The physical event of this period. III. The mission to which he was called,—he announced a judgment as coming. 1. According to his vision; 2. In a terrible form; 3. As issuing from a scene of mercy; 4. As fraught with calamitous results.[d]

3—5. (3) **Damascus,** the capital of Syria. **for four,** in this poetical form Amos declares that the sin punished has been continued and aggravated after warning.[e] **turn away,** so as to prevent it from falling. God "turns away" judgments upon men's repentance, but a time comes when they can be turned away no longer. **threshed,** *etc.*,[b] see 2 Ki. x. 32, 33. (4) **fire,**[c] used here as a symbol of destructive calamities, coming in various forms. (5) **bar,** wh. fastens the city-gate, and so lay the city at the command of its enemy. **plain of Aven,** Cœle Syria, the country between Libanus and Anti-Libanus.[d] **Kir,** Is. xxii. 6.[e]

Damascus (*v.* 5).—Rather more than a century ago, Mr. Maundrell visited the mountains of Lebanon. Having proceeded about half an hour through the olive yards of Sidon, he and his party came to the foot of Mount Libanus. They had an easy ascent for two hours, after which it grew more steep and difficult; in about an hour and a half more, they came to a fountain of water, where they encamped for the night. Next day, after ascending for three hours, they reached the highest ridge of the mountain, where the snow lay by the side of the road. They began immediately to descend on the other side, and in two hours came to a small village, where a fine brook, gushing at once from the side of the mountain, rushes down into the valley below, and after flowing about two leagues, loses itself in the river Letane. The valley is called Bocat, and seems to be the same with the Bicah-Aven of the Prophet: "I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain (rather the vale) of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden." The neighbourhood of Damascus, and particularly a place near it, which, in the time of Maundrell, still bore the name of Eden, renders his conjecture extremely probable. It might also have the name of Aven, which signifies vanity, from the idolatrous worship of Baal practised at Balbec or Heliopolis, which is situated in this valley.[f]

a "The word is from an Arab root, *to mark with pricks*, or, as some say, a species of sheep and goats *ill-shapen and short-footed*, but distinguished by their wool." —*Fausset.*

b Josephus relates it as a tradition among the Jews that this earthquake was sent as a punishment for Uzziah's presumption in invading the priest's office. 2 Chr. xxvi. 18, 19."—*Lowth.*

c Light boothlike structures, put up where the sheep are fed for a time.

d Dr. Thomas.

a It is a common way of speaking, to use a certain number for an uncertain, *e.g.* Job v. 19; Pr. xxx. 15, 18, 21, 29.

b "The thresher was a sort of wain, that moves on iron wheels set with teeth, so that it threshes out the corn, and breaks the straw in pieces."—*S. Jerome.*

c Nu. xxi. 28; De. xxxii. 22.

d "*Eden* is prob. *Brit-el-junne* (House of Paradise) situated 8½ hours from Damascus on the way from Banias."—*Porter.*

e 2 Ki. xvi. 9.

f Paxton.

6—8. (6) Gaza, Ge. x. 19 ; Jos. xiii. 3. carried, *etc.*, comp. 2 Chr. xxi. 16, 17 ; Joel iii. 6. (7) fire, figure of speech as in v. 4. (8) Ashdod,[a] Jos. xv. 46, 47. Celebrated for its worship of Dagon. holdeth the sceptre, *i.e.* the prince, or lord, of the place.[b] Ashkelon, Ju. i. 18. In later times famous for the worship of *Derceto*, the Syrian Venus. Ekron, Jos. xiii. 3. In the plain country, on the N.W. border of Judah. remnant, *comp.* Eze. xxv. 16 ; Je. xlvii. 4.

Slavery : moral and physical.—What slavery is like the slavery of sin ? In every other case there is hope : there are lulls, at least, and intervals of anguish ; there are alleviations, though perhaps they may be few and rare ; there is patience, there is prayer ; there may be the comfort of the cherished Spirit of God in the inner heart ; there is death, in which the consummation of earthly tyranny works its own cure, and the slave is free for ever ; but in the slavery of sin, there is no hope, no lull, no check, no flight, no patience, no prayer, no inward peace of a religious spirit counterbalancing the outward misery of the fettered limbs ; and death, the limit of the one slavery, is but the terrible "beginning of the end" of the other ; when sin, which has been allowed to rule in the heart and members during life, declares itself visibly and unmistakably to be the very tyrant of souls himself, the Prince of Darkness, to whose sway his slave is consigned to all eternity.[c]

9, 10. (9) Tyrus, Jos. xix. 29.[a] brotherly covenant, *see* 1 Ki. v. 1, 12, ix. 13. (10) fire, *etc.*, fulfilled when it was taken by Nebuc. after a thirteen years' siege.

The Marquess of Hastings.—Although the Marquess of Hastings was always fond of the public service, it was never for the sake of private gain ; on the contrary, his sacrifices to the public interest often injured his fortune. When in the early period of the French revolution he had a nominal command of English troops and French emigrants at Southampton his private expenditure exceeded £30,000 ; yet such was his delicacy and disinterestedness that he would not accept either pay, emolument, or even patronage. In the government of India, to which the Marquess of Hastings has since been appointed, the same zeal for the public service, and the same disregard of all personal advantages, has distinguished his government ; as a proof of this it is only necessary to state that he relinquished, for the public good, the sum of about £100,000, to which he was entitled as prize money during one of his successful military campaigns in India.[b]

11, 12. (11) Edom, Ge. xxv. 30. his brother, *see* Nu. xx. 14.[a] cast . . pity, *Heb.* "corrupted his compassions." (12) Teman . . Bozrah, two principal cities of Edom.[b] See Ge. xxxvi. 11, 33.

Advantage of pity.—When the Grecians had won Troy, before they fell to plunder it, they gave every man leave to bear his burden out of what he would. And, first of all, Æneas marched out, carrying his household gods ; which when they saw, and that he did them no great damage thereby, they bade him take another burthen ; which he did, and returned with his old father, Anchises, on his back, and his young son Ascanius in hand. Which the Grecians seeing, passed by his house, as Joshua did by the house of Rahab, saying, that no man should hurt him

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a "Ashdod stood about 3 miles from the Mediterranean, midway between Joppa and Gaza, on the great high road from Egypt into Palestine. It was hence a place of importance, and was frequently besieged."—*Ayre.*

b "The Hebrew name given to these rulers of the five combined Phil. cities, is *Seren*, or *Axle.*" —*Spk. Com.*

"Nature bids me love myself and hate all that hurt me ; reason bids me love my friends and hate those that envy me ; religion bids me love all and hate none. Nature showeth care, reason wit, religion love."—*Warwick.*

c *Dr. Moberly.*

a Is. xxiii. 1, etc. ; Je. xlvii. 4 ; Eze. xxvi. 2—21, xxvii. 2—36, xxviii. 1—26.

b *Percy Anec.*

a For the enmity of Edom to Israel comp. 2 Chr. xxviii. 17 ; Je. xlix. 7 ; Eze. xxv. 12, xxxv. 2 ; Joel iii. 19 ; Ob. v. 1—11.

b "Edom was a kingdom 500 yrs. before there reigned any king in Israel. Now it is a field of waste desolations. The sand

that was so religious. And thus that man that hath his mind set on his God shall receive no hurt by his enemy; for, when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. Nay, he shall be "in league with the stones of the field. and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with him." And, which is yet more, God will break the bow and the sword, and snap the spear asunder: he will make all those terrible instruments of war so unserviceable, that they shall lie down quietly by him, not offering the least hurt that may be.[c]

Radiancy of pity.—

No radiant pearl which crested fortune wears,
No gem that, twinkling, hangs from beauty's ears,
Not the bright stars which night's blue arch adorn,
Nor rising suns that gild the vernal morn,
Shine with such lustre as the tear that treaks
For others' woe down virtue's manly cheeks.[d]

13—15. (13) **Ammon**, Ge. xix. 38. Dwelling in the mountainous country round the sources of the Arnon and the Jabbok, Nu. xxi. 24; De. ii. 20. **because**, *etc.*, "As the Ammonites had been in league with the Syrians in David's time,[a] it is not improbable that they may have joined Hazael in his atrocious cruelty towards the Gileadites."[b] (14) **Rabbah**, De. iii. 11. **tempest**, *etc.*, figs. of an irresistible destruction.[c] (15) **king**, Je. xlix. 3. Perhaps Molech, or Malchom, the Ammonite god, is here meant.

Note on v. 13.—Margin, for "ripped," "divided the mountains." It was common in the ancient wars thus to treat women. but in general the Orientals are very kind to their wives in the state alluded to. Nay, even to animals in that condition, they are very tender: a man to beat his cow when with calf, would be called a great sinner; and to kill a goat or a sheep when with young, is altogether out of the question. The Hindoo hunters will not destroy wild animals when in that state. The term in the margin is applied to that condition. "In the tenth moon the child fell from the mountain."[d]

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—3. (1) **Moab**, Ge. xix. 37. **burned . . lime**, 2 Ki. iii. 27.[a] (2) **Kirioth**, lit. *the cities.* Je. xlviii. 24, 41. **tumult**, *comp.* Nu. xxiv. 17, where the word *Sheth* should be translated *tumult.* (3) **judge**, *comp.* the office of judge in Israel: chief magistrate.

Divine cognizance of human sins (*vv.* 1—8).—This fact—I. Should lead men to great circumspection of life. 1. They should sedulously avoid evil; 2. They should devoutly pursue good. II. It should impress men with the wonderful patience of God. 1. Which implies the greatest power; 2. Implies the greatest compassion. III. It should impress men with the certainty of retribution.[b]

Divine knowledge of sin.—

The book is opened and the seal removed,—
The adamantine book, where every thought,
Though dawning on the heart, then sunk again
In the corrupted mass, each act obscure,

from the Red Sea has absorbed nearly all its springs and streams, and made it one sheet of desert, from Mount Sinai to Moab. The sand is so deep that it is utterly out of the power of man ever again to cultivate the land" (Mal. i. 4). —*Goldsby.*

vv. 11, 12. *Dr. T. Taylor.* ii. 29.

c Spencer.

d Darwin.

a 2 Sa. x. 6.

b Spk. Com.

2 Ki. viii. 12, x. 32.

c Is. v. 26; Je. xxxv. 32; Da. xi. 40; Zec. ix. 14.

d Roberts.

"Nature may induce me, reason persuade me, but religion shall rule me. I will hearken to nature in much, to reason in more, to religion in all." —*Warwick*

a "The historical connection of this expression is doubtful. Some think ref. is to the revenge wh. prob. the king of Moab took on the king of Edom, when the forces of Israel and Judah had retired after their successful campaign against Moab, leaving Edom without allies. The Heb. tradition is, that Moab in revenge tore from their

In characters indelible remain.
How vain the boast, vile caitiff, to have 'scaped
An earthly forum ; now, thy crimson stains
Glare on a congregated world ; thy judge
Omniscience, and omnipotence thy scourge !
Thy mask, hypocrisy, how useless here,
When, by a beam shot from the fount of light,
The varnished saint starts up a ghastly fiend.[c]

grave and burned the bones of the king of Edom, the ally of Jehoram and Jehoshaphat, who was already buried."—*Fausset.*
b Dr. Thomas.
c Bailey.

4, 5. (4) **Judah,** the nation having higher privileges, and consequently higher responsibilities. **despised the law,** by taking their own way, and not following it. **lies,** idols, Ho. vii. 3. (5) **fire,** in this case the prophecy was literally fulfilled.[a]

The enormity of the sin of persecution (*v.* 4).—I. Persecution is a most arrogant crime. II. Persecution is a most absurd crime. III. Persecution is a most cruel crime.[b]

a 2 Ki. xxv. 9 ; Je. xvii. 27.

b Dr. Thomas.

6—8. (6) **sold,** *etc.*, ch. viii. 6. Prob. referring to the custom of taking bribes in judgment, and betraying the innocent.[a] Others think the violence of creditors is referred to.[b] **poor . . shoes,** or sandals. For only so much as would buy a pair of shoes.[c] (7) **pant . . poor,** or "tread down the heads of the poor into the dust of the earth." Utterly and shamefully oppress the poor. **profane,** *etc.*, this indicates that the reference is to the immorality connected with idolatrous rites. (8) **laid to pledge,** explained by De. xxiv. 12, 13. **condemned,** or those wickedly fined or mulcted.[d]

Profanity.—A person who lived in the parish of Sedgley, near Wolverhampton, having lost a considerable sum by a match at cock-fighting, to which practice he was notoriously addicted, swore, in the most horrid manner, that he would never fight another cock as long as he lived ; frequently calling upon God to damn his soul to all eternity if he did, and with dreadful imprecations, wishing the devil might fetch him if he ever made another bet. It is not to be wondered at, if resolutions so impiously formed, should be broken ; for a while, however, they were observed ; but he continued to indulge himself in every other abomination to which his depraved heart inclined him. But, about two years afterwards, Satan, whose willing servant he was, inspired him with a violent desire to attend a cocking at Wolverhampton ; and he complied with the temptation. When he came to the place, he stood up, as in defiance of heaven, and cried, "I hold four to three on such a cock." "Four what?" said one of his companions in iniquity. "Four shillings," replied he. "I'll lay," said the other. Upon which they confirmed the wager, and, as his custom was, he threw down his hat, and put his hand into his pocket for the money ; when, awful to relate, he instantly fell a ghastly corpse to the ground. Terrified at his sudden death, some who were present for ever after desisted from this infamous sport ; but others, hardened in iniquity, proceeded in this barbarous diversion, as soon as the dead body was removed from the spot.[e]—*Note on vv.* 6, 7, 8.—The shoes, or rather sandals, have the least honour of anything which is worn by man, because they belong to the feet, and are comparatively of little value. Nothing is more disgraceful than to be beaten with the sandals : thus when one man intends to exasperate another, he begins to take off a sandal, as if going to strike him. To spit in the face

a Wordsworth.
b Spk. Com.
c "They sell the precious souls of the poor for the meanest thing, with which they trample on the dust, or in the mire."—*S. Jerome.* The sandals are the most worthless part of the dress. So the expression is equal to *sold them for nothing.*
d "Extortion, self-indulgence, and hard-heartedness were combined under a show of religion."—*Spk.Com.*
e Whitecross.

"When I was in the galleries of Oxford, I saw many of the designs of Raphael and Michael Angelo. I looked upon them with reverence, and took up such of them as I was permitted to touch as one would take up a love token. It seemed to me these sketches brought me nearer the great masters than their finished pictures could have done, because therein I saw the mind's processes as they were first born.

is not a greater indignity than this. When a person wishes to insult another in reference to the price of any article, he says, "I will give you my sandals for it." "That fellow is not worth the value of my sandals." "Who are you, sir? you are not worthy to carry my sandals;" which alludes to the custom of a rich man always having a servant with him to carry his sandals; *i.e.* when he chooses to walk barefoot. "Over Edom will I cast out my shoe:" so contemptible and so easy was it to be conquered.*f*— Who were those that thus oppressed the poor, who sold them for a pair of shoes, and panted "after the dust of the earth?" They were the judges and the princes of the people. The Tamul translation has it, "To the injury of the poor they eagerly took the dust of the earth;" literally, they gnawed the earth as a dog does a bone. "Dust of the earth." What does this mean? I believe it alludes to the lands of the poor, of which they had been deprived by the judges and princes. Nothing is more common in Eastern language than for a man to call his fields and gardens his man, *i.e.* his dust, his earth. "That man has gnawed away my dust or sand." "Ah! the fellow! by degrees he has taken away all that poor man's earth." "The cruel wretch! he is ever trying to take away the dust of the poor." In consequence of there not being fences in the East, landowners often encroach on each other's possessions. On the latter part of the verse and the next to it, I dare not write. The heathenism, the devilism, described by Amos, is still the same. Who did these things? the princes, the judges, and the people of Judah.*g*— It was found advantageous, both for ease and health, to have a carpet or some soft and thick cloth spread on the ground for those to sit upon who dwelt in tents: subsequently, those who lived in houses used them too. When they held their idolatrous feasts in the temples dedicated to the gods, they sat upon the ground, but not on the bare earth, or the marble pavement of those temples, but upon something soft and dry spread under them, brought for the purpose. The clothes mentioned by the Prophet may mean the coverings of the body for the night, as well as for the day. "When it was dark, three coverlets, richly embroidered, were taken from a press in the room which we occupied, and delivered, one to each of us; the carpet or sofa, and a cushion, serving, with this addition, instead of a bed" (Chandler's *Travels in Asia Minor*). Such carpets or embroidered coverlets would neither be an improper pledge for money (Exod. xxii. 26, 27), nor disgrace the pomp of a heathen temple. It may not be amiss to consider why the circumstance of clothes being taken to pledge is mentioned here. Attending an idolatrous feast must have been undoubtedly wrong in these Israelites: but of what consequence was it to remark that some of them seated themselves on carpets that had been put into their hands by way of pledge? It may be answered, that it might be galling to those that had been obliged to pledge these valuable pieces of furniture secretly, to have them thus publicly exposed; that it may insinuate that these idolatrous zealots detained them, when they ought to have been restored (Ezek. xviii. 7, 12, 16, xxx. 15), and that they subjected them to be injured, in the tumult of an extravagant and riotous banquet in a heathen temple; to which may be added, that they might belong to some of their countrymen who abhorred those idols, and might consider them as dis-

They were the first salient points of the inspiration. Could I have brought them home with me, how rich I should have been! how envied for their possession! Now, there are open and free to us, every day of our lives, the designs of a greater than Raphael or Michael Angelo. God, of whom the noblest master is but a feeble imitator, is sketching and painting every hour the most wondrous pictures; not hoarded in any gallery, but spread in light and shadow round the whole earth, and glowing for us in the overhanging skies."—*Leecher.*

f *Roberts.*

g *Ibid.*

"Nature herself—the whole effect of God. Mind, matter, motion, heat, time, love, and life, and death, and immortality, those chief and first-born giants, all are there—all parts, all limbs of her their mother: she is all. *Clara.* And what does she? *Festus.* Produce: it is her life. The three I named last—life, death, deathlessness—glide in elliptic path round all things made—for none save God can fill the perfect whole, and are but to eternity as is the horizon to the world. At certain points each seems the other; now, the three are one; now, all invisible; and now,

honoured, and even dreadfully polluted, by being so employed. With respect to the last of these circumstances but one (the being injured in extravagant and riotous banqueting), I would remark that they are accustomed, in their common repasts, to take great care that their carpets are not soiled, by spreading something over them; but in public solemnities they affect great carelessness about them, as a mark of their respect and profound regard (Russel). Thus De la Valle, describing the reception the Armenians of Ispahan gave the king of Persia, in one of their best houses, when he had a mind to attend at the celebration of their Epiphany, says, after the ceremonies were over, he was conducted to the house of Chogra Sefer, a little before deceased, where his three sons and his brother had prepared everything for his reception: "All the floor of the house, and all the walks of the garden, from the gate next the street to the most remote apartments, were covered with carpets of brocatel, of cloth of gold, and other precious manufactures, which were, for the most part, spoiled, by being trampled upon by the feet of those that had been abroad in the rain, and their shoes very dirty: their custom being, not to put them off at the entering into a house, but only at the door of the apartments, and the places where they would sit down."[h]

9—12. (9) **Amorite,**[a] Nu. xxi. 24; De. ii. 31; Jos. xxiv. 8. God recalls the mercies of His early dealings with Israel. **height,** *etc.*, Nu. xiii. 32, 33. (10) **brought . . Egypt,** Ex. xii. 51, xx. 2. (11) **Nazarites,** Nu. vi. 2—21; Ju. xiii. 5; La. iv. 7. (12) **gave . . wine,**[b] forcing them thus to break their vows. **prophesy not,** for illus. of their so doing, comp. 1 Ki. xxii. 26, 27; 2 Chr. xvi. 9; Is. xxx. 10; Am. vii. 10—13.

God and nations (*v.* 9).—I. He reminds nations of the greatness of His kindness to them. 1. He often sacrifices one people in order to advance the interests of another; 2. The mightiest human powers cannot obstruct Him in His procedure; 3. He fulfils His great purposes with nations by the agency of man. II. He reminds the nations of the abuse of the mercies He has conferred on them. 1. A spiritual ministry; 2. Virtuous young men.[c]

13—16. (13) **as a cart,**[a] as is a heavily-laden cart. "I feel pressed or straitened." (14) **flight,** or place of flight; where refuge is sought. **strengthen his force,** or use it to any good purpose. (15) **swift of foot,** as Asahel. (2 Sa. ii. 18.) (16) **naked,** in the sense of having thrown away his weapons and looser garments in his hurried flight. "The word *naked* is used of those who lay aside their upper garments, or the habit proper to their quality or profession."[b]

God's complaint against us (*v.* 13).—Let us consider—I. What reason God has for this complaint against us. 1. Our disregard of His laws; 2. Our unmindfulness of His mercies; 3. Our contempt of His blessed Gospel. II. What reason we have to be deeply concerned about our state. 1. God is able to vindicate the honour of His injured majesty; 2. He is determined to avenge Himself; 3. The time of retribution is fast approaching. Infer—(1) What a burden ought sin to be to us; (2) What obligations do we owe to Jesus Christ.[c]

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as first, moving in measured round."—*Bailey.* "Discover what will destroy life, and you are a great man! what will prolong it, and you are an impostor! Discover some invention in machinery that will make the rich more rich, and the poor more poor, and they will build you a statue! Discover some mystery in art that will equalise physical disparities, and they will pull down their own houses to stone you."—*E. B. Lytton.*

h Burder.

a "The most powerful of all the Canaanite nations, and therefore part for them."—*Fausset.*

b "For Amos's references to the drinking habits of his day, see ch. ii. 8, iv. 1, vi. 6.

c Dr. Thomas.

a "In many portions of the country the sheaves are piled into a rude cart, upon wh. they are kept from falling by a wicker work about four feet high. These carts, or *arabas*, are prob. similar to those used by the Heb., and drawn by a pair of oxen."—*Van Lennep.*

b Lowth.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1, 2. (1) **whole family**, including both Israel and Judah. (2) **known**, in the sense of watched over and cared for. Israel was the people of special Divine privilege.[a] Ex. xix. 5 ; De. iv. 20. **punish you**, or visit upon you.[b] "However severe the punishment, God visited His people in love."

God's chastisements a covenant (*vv.* 1, 2).—I. The grounds for chastisement. 1. Peculiar relationships abused ; 2. Distinguishing privileges neglected ; 3. Special obligations denied. II. The design of this chastisement. 1. Punishment to purify moral character ; 2. Punishment to fit for greater service ; 3. Punishment to warn others of danger.[c]

Note on v. 2.—In Eastern language, to say you know a person, means you approve of him. Thus, should a man be well acquainted with two brothers, and should he not approve of one of them, he will say, "I do not know him." But of him he loves, he says, "Ah ! I know him well." Jehovah had known, *i.e.* approved of, Israel, but because of their abominations he had determined to punish them.[d]

3—6. (3) **walk together**, in the companionship of life. Implying that God cannot walk with man, unless man maintains the fellowship of obedience. (4) **lion**, *etc.*, as the roar is the assurance that he has, or will soon have, his prey, so God's warning by His Prophets is the assurance that He is coming to judge you. (5) **bird**, *etc.*,[a] his fall is the sign of the presence of the fowler. (6) **be afraid**, or run together. **evil**, in the sense of calamity, not of sin. Over all calamities Divine providence presided.[b]

Requisites for friendship with God (*v.* 3).—I. Inquire what it is for men to walk with God. 1. When they have a constant sense of His presence ; 2. When they have habitual communion ; 3. When they have cordial friendship with God. II. Inquire why there cannot be this walking with God without agreement. 1. There must be a process of reconciliation ; 2. There must be correspondence of taste and sentiment.[c]

A wise decision.—Eliza Ambert, a young Parisian lady, resolutely discarded a gentleman to whom she was to have been married, because he ridiculed religion. Having given him a gentle reproof, he replied, "that a man of the world could not be so old-fashioned as to regard God and religion." Eliza started, but, on recovering herself, said, "From this moment, sir, when I discover that you do not regard religion, I cease to be yours. He who does not love and honour God, can never love his wife constantly and sincerely."[d]

7, 8. (7) **Lord God**, or Jehovah God. **revealeth his secrets**, or deliberates with. **the prophets**, who were called out in each generation.[a] (8) **lion hath roared**, figure of speech, meaning God has announced His judgment. **who . . prophesy ?** *comp.* Je. xx. 9.

Interpretation and application of Scriptures.—There is a wide distinction between the interpretation and the application of Scripture. The latter is of much wider extent than the former. Interpretation is the province of few ; it requires a finer per-

a "Their being the *elect* people of God only heightened their sin."—*Calvin.*

b "When God's people do not glorify Him, He glorifies Himself by punishing them."—*Fausset.* Comp. Mat. x. 15, xi. 21, 22.

v. 2. *Dr. H. Killigrew*, 189 ; *Dr. Guyse*, 25 ; *E. Bather*, iii. 41.

c J. Wolfendale.

d Roberts.

a "The meaning of the *v.* seems to be, 'When a bird lights on the snare it is taken ; and when it is taken the snare rises, and so shows what has happened.'"—*Spk. Com.*

b Ps. xciv. 7, 9, 10.

v. 3. *H. Marriott*, 382 ; *R. P. Buddicom*, 1.

v. 6. *J. Potts*, 347 ; *Dr. S. Stennett*, iii. 437 ; *J. Wesley*, vii. 500 ; *Dr. S. Carr*, iii. 189 ; *W. H. Henslow*, 130.

c G. Brooks.

d Cheever.

a "There was a succession of prophets among the Jews from Samuel's time till the captivity ; the people commonly consulted them upon extraordinary occasions, and they

gave them counsel and direction as to what was proper to be done."—*Lowth.*

v. 7. *J. Davison, Warb. Lec.* 230.

b Jowett.

ception of language, and a higher degree of cultivation, than is attained by the majority of mankind. But applications are made by all, from the philosopher reading God in history to the poor woman who finds in them a response to her prayers, and the solace of her daily life. In the hour of death we do not want critical explanations; in most cases those to whom they would be offered are incapable of understanding them. A few words breathing the whole sense of the Christian world, such as, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," "I shall go to Him, but He shall not return to me," touch a chord which would never be reached by the most skilful exposition of the argument of one of St. Paul's Epistles.[b]

9—11. (9) **Ashdod**, Am. i. 8. **assemble**, *etc.*, "The Philistines and Egyptians were thus to be summoned to witness the enormities of wh. God's people had been guilty." **mountains of Samaria**, *i.e.* those round about the city.[a] **tumults**, or disorders. (10) **know not**, they are so corrupted as to have lost all sense of the right, and all care for the right.[b] **store up**, implying that they think they store up wealth and security, but they really store up injustice and oppression, and such stores surely become curses to those who store them.[c]

National calamities (*vv.* 9—12).—I. National guilt. 1. Moral sensibility impaired; 2. Public justice perverted; 3. Shameless fraud committed. II. National disorder. III. National disgrace. IV. National invasion. 1. Power which they abused shall be taken away; 2. Palaces which they stored shall be destroyed.[d]

12—15. (12) **shepherd .. ear**, when a lion is forced to leave his prey the shepherd is seldom able to save more than scraps of the torn. So when God's judgment is wrought on Samaria, there will be only scraps and remnants of it left.[a] **corner .. bed**, or that live luxuriously. The bed is the *divan*, or raised part of the room, covered with cushions. **couch**, the sign of ease and security. (13, 14) **altars of Beth-el**,[b] the one raised by Jeroboam, and others raised since his day. **cut off**, destroyed by the enemy. (15) **winter .. house**, Je. xxxvi. 21. **ivory**, 1 Ki. xxii. 39.[c]

The destroyer and the Rescuer (*v.* 12).—I. There is a destroying power at work in the world. 1. Variously represented; 2. His doings described; 3. He possesses mighty power; 4. Supreme subtlety. II. There is a rescuing power at work in the world. 1. Possessed of all power; 2. Possessed of all wisdom. III. God is ready to receive even the fragments. 1. Destruction was very near; 2. None need despair; 3. None may presume. IV. That which is rescued is for active service. 1. Two legs, activity; 2. A piece of an ear, attention, etc.[d]

Note on v. 12.—Two kinds of goats wander in the pastures of Syria and Canaan: one that differs little from the common sort in Britain; the other remarkable for the largeness of its ears. The size of this variety is somewhat larger than ours: but their ears are often a foot long, and broad in proportion. The Syrians keep them chiefly for their milk, of which they yield a considerable quantity. The present race of goats in the vicinity of Jerusalem are of this broad-eared species. To this kind of goat, so different from the common breed, it is probable the Prophet refers: "As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion

a "The site of Samaria is very remarkable. 'The fine round swelling hill, or almost mountain, of Samaria stands alone in the midst of a great basin of some two hours in diameter, surrounded by highermountains on every side."—*Robinson.*
b Je. iv. 22.
c Hab. ii. 8—10.
d J. Wolfendale.

a "When a flock was entrusted to the care of a shepherd, or other person, he was expected to make good to the owner the loss of any sheep or goat 'torn of beasts,' unless he could produce the carcase, or some portion of it, in evidence of the fact, and to assure the master that his servant had not improperly disposed of it for his own benefit."—*Kitto.*
b Ho. x. 15.

c "Houses whose internal decorations consisted chiefly of ivory—panels of ivory on their walls—couches of ivory on which the inmates reclined, and, if palaces, a throne of ivory for the king."—*Bib. Things.*

two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out, that dwell in Samaria and in Damascus." It is indeed the intention of the Prophet to express how few of his people escaped from the overthrow of their country, and were settled in foreign parts; but it would have been hardly natural to suppose that a shepherd would exert himself to make a lion quit a piece of an ear only of a common goat: it must therefore be supposed to refer to the long-eared kind. Rauwolf observed goats on the mountains around Jerusalem, with pendent ears almost two feet long.[d]—Sitting in the corner is a stately attitude, and is expressive of superiority. Russel says, "The divans at Aleppo are formed in the following manner. Across the upper end, and along the sides of the room, is fixed a wooden platform, four feet broad and six inches high; upon this are laid cotton mattresses exactly of the same breadth, and over these a cover of broadcloth, trimmed with gold lace and fringes, hanging over to the ground. A number of large oblong cushions stuffed hard with cotton, and faced with flowered velvet, are then ranged on the platform close to the wall. The two upper corners of the divan are furnished also with softer cushions, half the size of the others, which are laid upon a square fine mattress, spread over those of cloth, both being faced with brocade. The corners in this manner distinguished are held to be the places of honour, and a great man never offers to resign them to persons of inferior rank." Mr. Antes, among other observations made on the manners and customs of the Egyptians, from 1770 to 1782, says, on his being carried before one of the beys of Egypt, in about half an hour the bey arrived, with all his men, and lighted flambeaux before him; he alighted, and went up stairs into a room, sat down in a corner, and all his people placed themselves in a circle round him.[f]—*Note on v.* 15.—In the writings of Jeremiah and Amos, a distinction is made between winter and summer houses. Russel thinks they may refer to different apartments in the same house; but if the customs of Barbary resemble those of Palestine in this respect, it is better to understand them of different houses.

[d] *R. Berry.*

"An attendant came forward to usher us into the august presence of the ruler of Egypt. We proceeded into a large room, lighted by numerous windows on every side except that by which we entered. The pacha was standing up, but when he perceived us approach, he hastily took his accustomed seat in the corner with great alertness. Round three sides of the room was a broad scarlet divan, supplied with cushions of gold brocade resting against the walls. The corners were distinguished as places of honour by a square of crimson and gold silk, with a cushion of the same colour and material at the back of each."—*Hogg's "Visit to Damascus."*

[e] *Paxton.*

[f] *Armour.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—3. (1) **kine of Bashan,** a district famous for its fat cattle.[a] These kine represent voluptuous, effeminate rulers. **masters,** princes. Some think the ref. is to luxurious women,[b] then the masters represent their husbands. (2) **by his holiness,** wh. ensures His keeping His word of threatening. **hooks,** *etc.*,[c] invaders and spoilers are elsewhere compared to fishers.[d] (3) **go out,** driven out like cows through the nearest gap. **cast . . palace,** better, "cast away the things of the palace."

Sad pictures of human life (*vv.* 1—3).—I. Indolent abuse of prosperity. II. Might ruling over right—1. In oppressing the poor; 2. In crushing the needy. III. Confederacy in wickedness. IV. Debauchery in social conduct. V. Life terminating in great calamities. 1. Calamities fixed in time; 2. With great sacrifice; 3. From which none can escape; 4. Entailed upon posterity.[e]

Hooks and fish-hooks.—I am at a loss to know why there is a distinction betwixt "hooks" and "fish-hooks." I think it fanci-

[a] "The luxury and insolence of oppressors is often compared to the wantonness of full-fed cattle. Ps. xvii. 12, lxviii. 30."—*Lowth.*

[b] *Grotius.*

[c] "The modes of catching fish were the same as are still in use in all parts of Western Asia. They were taken with the hook, or with a scoop-net fastened round

ful to explain it by saying it means "two modes of fishing." The Tamul translation has, instead of "hooks," *kuradu, i.e.* pincers, and it ought to be known that these were formerly much used in punishments. In the Hindoo Hells this instrument is spoken of as being used to torture the inhabitants. A man in his rage says, "I will tear thee with pincers." "Alas! alas! I have been dragged away with pincers." "Ah! the severity of these troubles—they are like pincers." But it is said that hooks also were formerly used to stick into criminals when taken to the place of execution; and there is nothing very doubtful about this, because devotees often have large hooks fastened into their flesh, by which they are hoisted up on a long pole. "Your posterity with fish-hooks:" this figure is used in the East to show how people draw each other to any given place. Thus, does a man wish to have a large party at some feast or ceremony he is going to make, he persuades a man to say he will honour him with his company; and then he says to others, you are invited to meet such an illustrious guest, which causes numbers to come to the occasion. The man of rank in that case is called the fish-hook; because, through him, the guests are caught.[f]

a hoop and suspended from a pole. And on a larger scale fishing is done by means of a long net."—*Van Lennep.*

d Je. xvi. 16; Ha. i. 15.

e *J. Wolfendale.*

f *Roberts.*

4, 5. (4) Beth-el, one centre of idol worship. Gilgal, another such centre. after three years, *comp.* De. xxvi. 12. (5) offer, lit. *by burning;* comp. Le. ii. 11, vii. 12. liketh you, or this you like. "They thought highly of themselves, and of their gifts."

Worship and sin (*vv.* 4, 5).—The subject of the text is abounding worship with abounding sin. I. Abounding worship often implies abounding sin. This is the case when worship is—1. Selfish; 2. Formal. II. Abounding worship often springs from abounding sin. From—1. A desire to conceal sin; 2. A desire to appear good; 3. A desire to compensate for evils.[a]

a *Dr. Thomas.*

6—8. (6) cleaners of teeth, by reason of having little or no food to eat, with wh. the teeth might be soiled. not returned, under the persuasion of former and partial judgments. (7) rain, so essential to the harvest.[a] In this case, God sought to give warnings by making the fall of rain *partial.* (8) wandered, lit. *staggered:* seeking wherever they could hear that there was water.[b]

a "Want of rain at this critical season is utterly ruinous to the hopes of the farmer; a little earlier, or a little later, would not be so fatal; but drouth *three months before harvest* is entirely destructive."—*Thomson.*

b "The Israelites were obliged to leave their cities and homes to seek water at a distance."—*Calvin.*

Unavailing chastisements (*vv.* 6—12).—I. That the design of God is in all His dispensations to bring men from their wanderings back again to Himself. II. That these dispensations often fail to answer the end for which they were intended. III. That when such dispensations are disregarded the most disastrous consequences are likely to ensue.

Chastisements.—It cost Him much (oh, how much!) trouble, sorrow, beating, grinding, before He became bread for us. There may be a scarcity of other *Bread;* there is none of this to those who rightly seek it. It is dear in regard of the preciousness, not dear in regard of the price; we pay nothing for it but faith and love. Though thousands pray at once with the disciples, "Lord, evermore give us this bread," Jesus's storehouse can never be emptied. He only grows not rich with receiving, neither grows poor with giving. Rejoice then, beloved, the Lord is the giver, the Lord is the gift. Let not your souls be starved with these inferior things, which are few in number,

small in measure, bad in nature, "while there is bread enough, and to spare, in your Father's house."[c]

9—11. (9) **blasting**, *etc.*, injuries affecting the ripe grain and the vineyards. By blasting is meant the "scorching of the poisonous east wind." **palmerworm**, a species of locust.[a] (10) **pestilence**, affecting the people. Is. x. 26. With especial remembrance of the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt. **your horses**, 2 Ki. xiii. 7. (11) **overthrown**, *etc.*, prob. referring to some local destructions by earthquake. **firebrand**,[b] Zec. iii. 2.

Pestilence.—There are those who will not hear of great pestilences being God's scourges of man's sins, who fain would find out natural causes for them, and account for them by the help of these. They may do so, or imagine that they do so; yet every time they use the word "plague" they implicitly own the fact which they are endeavouring to deny; for "plague" means properly, and according to its derivation, "blow" or "stroke," and was a title given to those terrible diseases, because the great universal conscience of men, which is never at fault, believed and confessed that these were "strokes" or "blows" inflicted by God on a guilty and rebellious world.[c]

12, 13. (12) **thus**, *i.e.* with the severer judgments already announced. **meet thy God**, in His most terrible aspects, as the just punisher of overwhelming transgressions. (13) **formeth**, *etc.*,[a] this, and the other similar words in this *v.*, indicate the ease with wh. God fashions and controls all things. So it is a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The important interview (*v.* 12).—I. The person. 1. God—the infinite, just, offended; 2. Thy God, personal relation. II. The meeting. 1. Inevitable; 2. Personal; 3. Equitable; 4. Conclusive. III. Preparation. 1. Seek an advocate; 2. Trust yourself in His hands; 3. Follow all His counsel.[b]

Taking off the Methodist.—The Rev. Mr. Madan was educated for the bar. His conversion to God arose from the following circumstances. Some of his companions, when assembled one evening at a coffee-house, requested him to go and hear the Rev. John Wesley, who, they were informed, was to preach in the neighbourhood, and then to return and exhibit his manner and discourse for their entertainment. With that intention he went to the house of God. Just as he entered the place, Mr. Wesley read as his text, "Prepare to meet thy God," Amos iv. 12, with a solemnity of accent which excited his attention, and produced a seriousness which increased as the good man proceeded in exhorting his hearers to repentance. Mr. Madan returned to the coffee-room, and was asked by his companions if he had taken off the old Methodist. He replied, "No, gentlemen, but he has taken me off;" and from that time forsook their company, associated with true Christians, and became an eminently good man.[c]

c Thomas Adams, 1623.

a Joel i. 4.

b "Those who had escaped had escaped as narrowly as a half-consumed stick snatched from the fire."—*Spk. Com.*

Joyce Lewis.—"When I behold the ugli-some face of death, I am afraid; but when I consider Christ's amiable countenance, I take heart again."

c Abp. Trench.

a Both God's knowledge and power are infinite, then who can resist His will?

b W. W. Whythe.

John Huss said to a countryman who threw a faggot at his head, "O holy simplicity, God send thee better light! You roast the goose now, but a swan shall come after me, and he shall escape your fire." Huss, a goose in the Bohemian language, and Luther a swan.

c Cheever.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1—3. (1) **lamentation**, or funeral dirge, "bemoaning the state of the kingdom of Israel, as dead and irrecoverably lost."[a] (2) **virgin**, Is. xxiii. 12, xxxvii. 22. The term usually stands for a city or kingdom which has not been conquered.[b] **fallen**, as one wounded in battle. **forsaken**, better, "flung, or dashed on the ground:" prostrated upon. (3) **went out**, *etc.*, or from wh. there used to go forth a thousand armed men. **leave a hundred**, or have only a hundred left.[c]

The funeral dirge (*vv.* 1—3).—I. The death of the nation. 1. The state was destroyed; 2. Violently; 3. Hopelessly. II. The mourning for the nation. 1. The Prophet mourned; 2. So did the people.[d]

4—6. (4) **seek ye me**, in penitence, prayer, and obedience. **live**, in the sense of being secure and prosperous as a nation. (5) **Beth-el**, ch. iv. 4. **Beer-sheba**,[a] on the S. frontier of Judah. At this time a great centre of idolatry. **Gilgal . . captivity**, *lit.* a play on words, "Gilgal (the place of rolling) shall rolling be rolled away." (6) **the Lord**, the covenant God, Jehovah. **house of Joseph**, Ob. 18; Zech. x. 6.[b]

Bethel.—During the still evening, when the shadows were deepening in the glens, and the last rays of the declining sun gilding the top of rock and cliff, I explored the site of this the most ancient of Israel's holy places. I looked all round, in the hope of identifying the spot where Jacob slept, and which he consecrated and called the "house of God." I explored the rock sepulchres, too, which dot the sides of "the mount" (2 Ki. xxiii. 16), thinking that one or other of them might be that of "the man of God from Judah," whose bones Josiah respected (*vv.* 17, 18). Clambering to the top of a shattered tower which crowns the hill of Bethel, I looked long, and in sadness, over that dreary field of ruin, only inhabited by a few shepherds.[c]

7—9. (7) **wormwood**, De. xxix. 18, "Ye that pervert the law wh. was designed to protect innocence, and under colour of it exercise the greatest oppression."[a] **leave . . earth**, better, "cast it down to the ground." (8) **seven stars**, the Pleiades; see Job ix. 9, xxxviii. 31. **shadow of death**, fig. for the night;[b] or the deepest gloom, with some reference to times of calamity. **the waters**, or floods. The Jews call all great bodies of waters *seas*. (9) **spoiled**, better, "that maketh spoil (or desolation) to flash upon the strong."[c]

Science the handmaid to religion (*v.* 8).—I. Science exalts our conceptions of our Lord Jesus Christ by enlarging our views of the vastness of the universe. II. Confirms our persuasion of the supremacy of moral and spiritual law by establishing the supremacy of natural law. III. Illustrates the power of love to God and to the Redeemer by revealing the power of the principle of attraction. IV. Points out a guarantee for the safety of the believer by demonstrating the stability of the heavenly bodies. V. Suggests an analogy of the preparation of heaven for the saints in the preparation of the earth for man. VI. Furnishes a parallel to the devising of a plan of salvation before the fall, in the prospective arrangements of the natural world.[d]

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a Je. vii. 29; Eze. xix. 1.
b "Or, the term 'virgin' may apply to a state on account of its beauty, and the delights on which it prides itself, its luxuries, power, and wealth."—*Calvin.*
c De. xxviii. 62; Is. xxx. 17.
d *J. Wolfendale.*

a Ge. xxi. 33, xxii. 19.

b Eze. xxxvii. 19.

Barlaam, holding his hand in the flame over the altar, sung that of the Psalmist, "Thou teachest my hands to war, and my fingers to fight."

c *Dr. Porter.*

a *Lowth.*

Ho. x. 4.

b "God can create the light, and make it spring from darkest night: and when He covers o'er the day, the darkness chases light away."—*Pindar.*

c "Maketh devastation (or destruction) suddenly to arise, lit. maketh it to gleam forth like the dawn."—*Maurer.*

d *G. Brooks.*

10—13. (10) **gate**, chief place of concourse.[a] Ref. is to the magistrate who is faithful enough to rebuke the oppressors. (11) **take . . wheat**, exact presents of wheat, as bribes.[b] **built**, *etc.*, Zep. i. 13. Comp. the prophecy of Moses, De. xxviii. 30, 38, 39. Hewn stone would be a sign of wealth and luxury. (12) **manifold transgressions**, or daring impieties. **turn aside**, refusing to give due heed to their pleadings. (13) **prudent**, or judicious, sensible man. He will refuse to take part in magistracy or politics.[c]

God knows our sins (*v.* 12).—Let us consider—I. The information here given to us: He knows our sins—1. In all their extent and variety; 2. In all their heinousness and aggravation. II. The use we should make of it. 1. We should beg of God to discover to us the real state of our souls; 2. We should entreat Him to humble us in the dust before Him; 3. We should look to our Lord Jesus Christ as our hope; 4. We should walk with all possible circumspection before God.[d]

Matthew Hale in disguise.—The younger of two brothers had endeavoured to deprive the elder of an estate of £500 a year, by suborning witnesses to declare that he died in a foreign land. Coming into the court in the guise of a miller, Sir Matthew Hale was chosen the twelfth juryman, to sit on this cause. As soon as the clerk of the court had sworn in the jurymen, a little dexterous fellow came into their apartment and slipped ten gold pieces into the hands of eleven of the jury, and gave the miller five, while the judge was known to be bribed with a great sum. The judge summed up the evidence in favour of the younger brother, and the jury were about to give their assent, when the supposed miller stood up and addressed the court with such energetic and manly eloquence, as astonished the judge and all present; unravelled the sophistry to the very bottom, proved the fact of bribery, evinced the elder brother's title to the estate from the contradictory evidence of the witnesses, and gained a complete victory in favour of truth and justice.[e]

14, 15. (14) **ye have spoken**, or boasted.[a] (15) **hate**, *etc.*, Is. i. 16, 17; Ro. xii. 9. **judgment**, upright, honourable magistracy. **remnant of Joseph**, *comp.* "house of Joseph," *v.* 6.

Religion (*v.* 14).—Two things may hence be inferred concerning religion. I. It implies a specific pursuit. 1. It implies a standard of right; 2. Their object is a human pursuit; 3. The pursuit of good is a specific effort of religion. II. It involves the highest benediction. 1. The enjoyment of true life; 2. The enjoyment of the Divine friendship.[b]

16, 17. (16) **therefore**, bec., that is, of the sins of wh. they were guilty, and of wh. they refused to repent. **wailing**, "the orig. word means, *smiting on the breast* as a sign of sorrow, and esp. in mourning for the dead."[a] **skilful**, *etc.*, wailing for the dead was a business for wh. some were trained;[b] these were usually females. (17) **vineyards**, places where songs were generally heard. **pass . . thee**, with Divine judgments.

Effects of sorrows.—

Sorrows like showers descend; and as the heart
For them prepares, they good or ill impart;
Some on the mind, as on the ocean rain,
Fall and disturb, but soon are lost again;

a De. xxv. 7, 1 Ki. xxii. 10.

b "Burdensome taxes levied in *kind* from the wheat of the needy, to pamper the lusts of the great."—*Henderson.*

c "He will live as much as may be in retirement, taking no part where he can do no good, and may be grievously wronged."—*Spk. Com.*

d *C. Simeon, M.A.*

Hugh Laverocke, comforting John-a-Price, his fellow-martyr, said unto him—"Be of good comfort, my brother, for my lord of London is our good physician; he will cure thee of all thy blindness, and me of my lameness this day."

e *Cheever.*

a Mi. iii. 11.

b *Dr. Thomas.*

a *Spk. Com.*

b Eccl. xii. 5. "All funeral processions, except those of the very poorest, are attended by wailing women. There are many women who let themselves out as wailers, at so much for the day, just as char women are hired in our own

country. Of course those who can utter the most horrid shrieks are the most approved."—*Gadsby.*

Some, as to fertile lands, a boon bestow,
And seeds, that else had perished, live and grow;
Some fall on barren soil, and thence proceed
The idle blossom and the useless weed.[c]

[c] *Crabbe.*

18—20. (18) **desire**, *etc.*, reference is to the hypocritical sayings of false prophets.[a] **what end**, or how can it meet your wishes, seeing it must come as national calamity. (19) **lion**, *etc.*, representing calamities in such a succession that a man may not hope to escape them. **leaned . . wall**, to support himself from falling.[b] (20) **very dark**, *comp.* Ex. x. 22.

[a] Comp. Is. v. 19; Je. xxx. 7; Joel ii. 2; Zep. i. 15.

[b] "Serpents often lurk concealed in the walls of Eastern houses."—*Lane.* "As if a man should go into a house to avoid the severity of the weather abroad, and a viper, whose sting is incurable, should creep out of the wall, and bite him."—*Lowth.*

Serpents in Eastern houses.—Serpents sometimes conceal themselves in the holes and chinks of the walls of Eastern houses. This is confirmed by a remarkable story related by D'Herbelot: "Arnadeddulat, who reigned in Persia in the tenth century, found himself reduced to great difficulties arising from want of attention to his treasury. Walking one day in one of the rooms of his palace, which had been before that time the residence of Jacout, his antagonist, he perceived a serpent, which put its head out of a chink in the wall; he immediately ordered that the place should be searched, and the serpent killed. In opening the wall there, they found a secret place in which they could not discover the serpent, but a treasure which was lodged in several coffers, in which Jacout had deposited his most precious effects."

21—24. (21) **I hate**, *etc.*, Is. i. 11; Je. vi. 20. **smell**, fig. applied to the rising incense, and signifying *accept.*[a] (22) **peace-offerings**, or thank-offerings. (23) **viols**, or harps. (24) **judgment**, with special ref. to righteous administration of the laws. **run down**, lit. *roll*, flow abundantly. This is the only condition on wh. sacrifice can be acceptable to God.

[a] Ge. viii. 21.

The formalist.—There are some, if you would see their goodness, and be acquainted with their godliness, you must hit the right time, or else you will find none, like some flowers that are seen but some months in the year. This may be in the morning: you may take the hypocrite on his knees in a saint's posture; but when that fit is over, you shall see little of God in all its course, till night brings him again, of course, to the like duty. The watch is nought that goes only at first winding up, and stands all the day after; and so is that heart, sure, that desires not always to keep in spiritual motion.[b]—*Acquiring formalism.*—It is so easy to be orthodox in creed and statement, so safe to rest in a merely traditional belief, that many a decorous Christian fails to perceive the sure though invisible connection between the *lip-confession* and the *life-denial* of a merely outward profession, and the broader form of denial by which all such profession is decided. Yet between Christ mocked and Christ rejected there is but a single step; and who shall say how easily it is taken, or how quickly we may pass from the hollow homage, the "Hail Master," which mocks our Lord, to the smiting and buffeting of open outrage!

[b] *A Divine of the 17th Century.*

John Bradford, embracing the reeds and faggots, said—"Strait is the way, and narrow is the gate, and few that find it." And speaking to his fellow martyr, said, "Be of good comfort, brother, for we shall have a merry supper with the Lord this night; if there be any way to heaven on horseback or in fiery chariots, this is it."

25—27. (25) **have ye**, *etc.*, Ac. vii. 42. (26) **borne**, all the time you have been, secretly or openly, worshipping your own idol-gods. **tabernacle**, or shrine,[a] prob. one small and portable. **Moloch**, answering to Mars, the Sun. **Chiun**, poss. Saturn;[b] but the explanation of the word is uncertain. Stephen quotes

[a] Comp. Ac. xix. 24.

[b] Some trans. "And the stand or pedestal of your images."

the name as *Rempham.* (27) beyond Damascus, into wild and unknown regions. Comp. Ac. vii. 43.

Forms of idolatry.—Asia worships the true God, but has false conceptions of Him. This is the land of dreamy intellect, of morbid sensibilities, of stationary civilisations. We see the conception of God variously modified in different nations, and we mark, as we pass over them, a ripening of the human mind in proportion to the approach to a right and perfect conception of the Almighty. Lowest in the scale, perhaps, we may place the Brahmins. They acknowledge a supreme God. Brahm, but they put him afar off, and ascribe creation, preservation, and destruction to inferior divinities. As might be expected, they overthrow his altars, neglect his temple, and leave him nothing but the name, while they give their chief adoration to the god Vishnu and his nine incarnations, of which Juggernaut is one. What is their intellectual state? Next comes Buddhism, which overspreads farther India, the Chinese empire, and Japan. This is a reformation of Brahminism. While it recognises an eternal First Cause, it represents Him as reposing in profound slumber, from which He only now and then awakes to send down some perfected spirits, that they may make certain necessary alterations in the universe.[b]

"In one of the heathen temples of Canton are seen plaster representatives of the transmigration of souls. A boy is changing into a dog; a man has horns growing from his forehead, his feet and hands are changing to hoofs, a tail is sprouting from his back; another is changing into an ass, etc."—*B. Ilf. Atterbury.*

b Bp. Thomson.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1, 2. (1) at ease, in their self-security. trust, *etc.*, better, "and to the self-confident ones in the mountain of Samaria." So both the self-indulgent of Judah and Israel are here addressed. chief, or capitals of the two nations. (2) Calneh, Ge. x. 10. Hamath, Nu. xxxiv. 8. Gath, Jos. xiii. 3. border, or territory.[a]

The secure alarmed (*v.* 1).—Who are those who deserve this charge? I. Some are at ease in Zion—1. From selfish insensibility; 2. Some from infidel presumption; 3. Some from vain confidence: 4. Some from practical indifference. II. Inferences derived from this subject. 1. Surely they are highly criminal who encourage such a state; 2. Let none be troubled when they find their connections distressed and alarmed with a sense of sin and danger; 3. There is consolation for those who are distressed in Zion.[b]

Uncomfortableness in church.—Archbishop Whately related the following anecdote. During his ministry at Halesworth, one of his parishioners told him that he thought a person should not go to church to be made uncomfortable. Whately replied that he thought so to, but whether it should be the sermon or the man's life that should be altered, so as to avoid the discomfort, must depend on whether the doctrine was right or wrong.—*A sinner for doing nothing.*—"He made me out a sinner for doing nothing," was the remark of one who had been awakened under a sermon from the words, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!" It was a new thought to the poor man, who had been comforting himself with the plea that he had done nothing very bad. But now he saw that his greatest sin was the very thing in which he had been comforting himself, namely, that of always and for ever "doing nothing."

a "Look to E., N., and W., and see whether any of the great kingdoms there are better (*i.e.* more favoured by God) than these kingdoms of Israel."—*Wordsworth.*

b W. Jay.

A physician thus describes the effects of spirituous liquors: "Houses without windows; gardens without fences; fields without tillage; barns without roofs; children without principle, clothing, or manners. Ardent spirits crowd the sheriff's docket; fill our jails with criminals; our hospitals with patients; our churchyards with premature graves!"

3—6. (3) put far away, or have a habit of putting far away. seat of violence, *i.e.* turning the seat of judgment into the seat of oppression, taking advantage of the seeming delay of God's threatenings. (4) beds of ivory, ch. iii. 15. stretch, *etc.*, in listless self-indulgence. lambs, *etc.*, or the very best of everything. (5) chant, marg. *quaver*. like David, who invented or improved the *nebel* and the *kinnor*, kinds of harps, the former played with the hand, the latter with the plectrum. (6) bowls, intimating there was no limit to the quantity. ointments, used as scents are with us.

Man's evil day (*v.* 3).—I. All men have an evil day in their future. II. Some men adjourn in thought this evil day—1. Not because they have any doubt as to its advent; 2. Nor because they lack reminders of its approach. But because of—1. The strength of our material attachments; 2. Our dread of the mysterious; 3. Lack of interest in the spiritual; 4. A conscious unpreparation for the scenes of retribution. III. None who adjourn this evil day in thought can delay it in fact.[a]

Lambs.—Amos reckons *fat lambs* among the delicacies of the Israelites; and it seems these creatures are in the East extremely delicious. Sir John Chardin, in his manuscript note to Amos, vi. 4, expresses himself in very strong terms on the deliciousness of these animals in the East. He tells us that there, in many places, lambs are spoken of as a sort of food excessively delicious. That one must have eaten of them in several places of Persia, Media, and Mesopotamia, and of their kids, to form a conception of the moisture, taste, delicacy, and fat of this animal; and as the Eastern people are no friends of game, nor of fish, nor fowls, their most delicious food is the lamb and the kid. This observation illustrates those passages that speak of kids as used by them for delicious repasts and presents: as well as those others that speak of the feasting on lambs. It also gives great energy to our apprehensions of what is meant when the Psalmist talks of marrow and fatness.[b]—*Ivory.*—Ivory is so plentiful in the East, it is no wonder that the sovereigns had their beds made principally of that article. But why is there a distinction made in reference to beds and couches? I believe the latter word refers to the swinging cot, as the Tamul translation also implies. In the houses of the voluptuous these cots are always found, and many are the stories in ancient books of kings and queens who were swinging together in their cots. When a man affects a great delicacy as to the place where he sleeps, it is common to say "You had better have a swinging cot."[c]

7—11. (7) banquet, or luxurious opportunities of self-indulgence. (8) excellency, or finery and luxury: the signs of their pride. (9) ten . . die, in the famine and the siege. (10) uncle, he will have to act as near relative. bec. the father and the brothers will be dead. This uncle will have himself to bury the dead of the house. hold . . Lord, the expression of utter despair; it is no good *now* to call on the Lord.[a] (11) breaches, or droppings, atoms, dust.

Intemperance.—Intemperance is a perfect destruction of wisdom, "a full-gorged belly never produced a sprightly mind," and therefore these kind of men are called *gasteres argai*, "slow bellies," so St. Paul concerning the intemperate Cretans, out of their own poet: they are like the tigers of Brazil, which when

"Leaves have their time to fall, and flowers to wither at the north wind's breath, and stars to set; but all—thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death!" —*Mrs. Hemans.*

a Dr. Thomas.

"It is as natural to die as to be born; and, to a little infant, perhaps the one is as painful as the other." This is the philosophic view of death. The Christian has nobler consolation. He can say, as did a minister recently when on his dying bed, "I have often laughed to see Death shake his dart at me. 'O grave! where is thy victory?'"

b Harmer.

c Roberts.

a "This represents the wretched reprobate condition to which Israel would be reduced."—*Wordsworth.*

"Chardin, speaking concerning the rains, says, "they are the rains which cause the walls to fall, which are built of clay, the

they are empty are bold and swift, and full of sagacity ; but being full, sneak away from the barking of a village dog. So are these men, wise in the morning, quick and fit for business ; but when the sun gives the sign to spread the tables, and intemperance brings in the messes, and drunkenness fills the bowl, then the man falls away, and leaves a beast in his room. . . . A full meal is like Sisera's banquet, at the end of which there is a nail struck into a man's head ; so Porphyry, "it knocks a man down, and nails his soul to the sensual mixtures of the body."[b]—*Note on vv.* 9, 10.—These verses and the context refer to the mortality which should result from the pestilence and famine (in consequence of the sins of the people) ; and to the burning of the bodies. The number "ten" probably refers to many, as that is a common expression in the East to denote many. I believe the whole alludes to the custom of burning human bodies. and to that of gathering up the half-calcined bones. and to the putting them into an earthen vessel, and then to the carrying back these fragments to the house or into some outbuilding, where they are kept till conveyed to a sacred place. In India this is done by a son or a near relation ; but in case there is not one near akin, then any person who is going to the place (as to the Ganges) can take the fragments of bones, and thus perform the last rites. Dr. Boothroyd takes the same view as to the place where the bones have to be kept till they are removed, because he translates, "a side-room of the house." "Hold thy tongue," finds a forcible illustration in chap. viii. 3, where it is mentioned that there were "dead in every place ;" and where it is said, they were to "cast them forth with silence." When the cholera or any other pestilence has carried off many of the people, the relations cease to weep or speak ; they ask, "What is the use of wailing?" it is over, "hold thy tongue."[c]

12—14. (12) upon the rock,[a] a very unreasonable thing ; not so unreasonable as the conduct of Israel towards God, ch. v. 7, and esp. of the corrupt judges. (13) horns, De. xxxiii. 17 ; Ps. lxxxix. 17. "These boasters attributed all their success to themselves." (14) river . . wilderness, prob. Wady el Ahsa, on the southern border of Moab.

Sycamore tree.—We had been sitting under a sycamine fig tree (the sycamore of the Bible), and were talking of its connection with the history of Zaccheus, when looking up we espied two little Arab girls hidden among the branches, gathering the wretched fruit which it bore in abundance. . . . Tasteless and woody, these sycamore figs must surely have been those in the Prophet's vision. when he pronounced the figs in the second basket to be "very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad" (Jer. xxiv. 2), and which were an apt emblem of the rejected Zedekiah and his people. Figs, however, they are. The tree is a congener of the celebrated banyan tree of India. It is one of the easiest trees to climb, with its short stem and wide lateral branches forking out in all directions : and bearing, as it does, little figs on small sprigs all round the trunk and principal limbs, the youngest children can safely climb and gather them. It bears abundantly, perhaps at all seasons, for I have certainly found its fruit from November to June. But it is a very tender tree, and does not thrive in the highlands ; indeed, I cannot recall any instance in which we met with it excepting

mortar - plastering dissolving. This plastering hinders the water from penetrating the bricks ; but when the plastering has been soaked with wet, the wind cracks it, and occasions the rain in some succeeding showers to get between and dissolve everything.' This account illustrates the words of the Prophet in a very happy manner, as the houses were mostly built of these fragile materials." - *Harmer.*

b Jeremy Taylor.

c Roberts.

a "As horses and oxen are useless on a rock, so ye are incapable of fulfilling justice."—*Grotius.*

"Not all the sights your boasted garden yields, are half so lovely as my father's fields ; where large increase has bless'd the fruitful plain, and we with joy behold the swelling grain! whose heavy ears, toward the earth reclined, wave, nod, and tremble to the whisking wind." —*Mrs. Leapor.*

An aged Christian, living in the poor-house, while conversing

with a minister, showed signs of much joy. As a reason for it, she said, "O sir! I was just thinking what a change it will be from the poor-house to heaven!"

on the sea-coast, where frost is unknown, and in the still warmer Jordan valley. This fact illustrates the expression in 1 Chron. xxvii. 28, "Over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that were in the low plains was Baal-hanan the Gederite;" and also that in Ps. lxxviii. 47, "He destroyed . . . their sycamore trees with frost:" for in Egypt, where the sycamore fruit is abundant, frost is of course unknown. No trees now overhang that dusty and scorched track (along which our Lord passed when Zaccheus met Him), and the sycamore would seem, like the palm and the balsam, to have perished from the plain. . . . We were gratified by the discovery that, though scarce, it is not yet extinct in the plains of Jericho, as we found two aged trees in the little ravine just to the south of these ruins, in illustration of the Gospel narrative.[b]

[b] *Tristram.*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

[a] *Spk. Com.*

[b] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Ephemera die all at sunset, and no insect of this class has ever sported in the beams of the morning sun. Happier are ye, little human ephemera! Ye played only in the ascending beams, and in the early dawn, and in the eastern light; ye drank only of the preïbations of life: hovered for a little space over a world of freshness and of blossoms; and fell asleep in innocence before yet the morning dew was exhaled!"—*Richter.*

1—3. (1) **grasshoppers**, or young locusts. **latter growth**, or the *aftermath.* **king's mowings**, so the first crop of grass was called, poss. bec. a proportion of it went for the king's use. (2) **by . . arise?** better, "Who is Jacob, that he should arise? How can he arise, stand and endure, if thus visited?"[a] **small**, bec. of continued judgments and calamities. (3) **repented**, or granted a respite at the Prophet's entreaty.

God's condescension to prayer (*vv.* 2, 3).—We may learn—I. That the judgments we fear may be averted by prayer. 1. Judgments of the heaviest kind are denounced against us; 2. But they all may be removed by fervent and believing prayer. II. That the weakness we feel may be urged by us as a plea. 1. Such may be our plea; 2. And such may be our success. Address—1. Those who despise the judgments of the Lord; 2. Those who are sinking under discouraging apprehensions.[b]

Hay.—As they seldom make any hay in the East, the word rendered "mowing" should rather have been "feedings." There is reason to conjecture, from the following passage of La Roque, that the time of the king's feedings was the month of March, or thereabout: "The Arabs," he tells us, from the papers of D'Arvieux, "turn their horses out to grass in the month of March, when the grass is pretty well grown; they then take care to have their mares covered, and they eat grass at no other time in the whole year, any more than hay: they never give them any straw but to heat them. when they have been some time without discovering an inclination to drink; they live wholly upon barley." The Arab horses are all designed for riding and war; so, there is reason to believe, were those of the kings of Israel: and if the present usages of the Arabs prevailed anciently. they were turned out early in the spring. in the month of March, and at other times were nourished with barley. These things seem to determine the time of the king's feedings to March, of the shooting up of the latter growth of April.[c]

[c] *Burder.*

[a] Re. xvii. 15.

Weakness always appeals to our sympathy. Ask the careful mother which

4—6. (4) **called**, or was calling. **to contend**, judicially. **fire**, prob. fig for *drought.* **great deep**, symbol for *many people.*[a] (5) **by whom**, *v.* 2. (6) **repented**, *v.* 3.

Common salvation.—The Gospel river of life does not branch out into divers streams. There is not a broad sweep of water

for the rich, the intellectual, and the cultivated, and a little scant runnel where the poor may now and then come and get healed by the side of its precarious wave. There is no costly sanatorium beneath whose shade patrician leprosy may get by itself to be fashionably sprinkled and healed. Naaman, with all his retinue watching, must come, and dip, and plunge like common men in Jordan. There is no sort of salvation except the one ransom and deliverance that is purchased for rich and poor together by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the poor beggar, his garment ragged from the havoc of a hundred storms, and his flesh bleeding from the ulcers of a hundred wounds, may dip eagerly into the same Bethesda, and emerge unscarred and comely as a child.[b]

7—9. (7) **plumbline**, string with a weight attached, used in securing the straightness of an erection. (8) **set the plumbline**, or measure, and arrange for its destruction.[a] (9) **rise .. sword**, as an agent of punishment.[b]

The folly of sin.—To them who believe another life after this, an eternal state of happiness or misery in another world (which is but a reasonable postulatum or demand among Christians), there is nothing in mathematics more demonstrable than the folly of wicked men; for it is not a clearer and more evident principle that the whole is greater than a part, than that eternity and the concernments of it are to be preferred before time. . . . Is that man wise, as to his body and his health, who only clothes his hands, but leaves his whole body naked? who provides only against the toothache, and neglects whole troops of mortal diseases that are ready to rush in upon him? Just thus does he who takes care only for this vile body, but neglects his precious and immortal soul, who is very solicitous to prevent small and temporal inconveniences, but takes no care to escape the damnation of hell. Is he a prudent man, as to his temporal estate, that lays designs only for a day, without any prospect to, or provision for, the remaining part of his life? Even so does he that provides for the short time of this life, but takes no care for all eternity, which is to be wise for a moment, but a fool for ever, and to act as untowardly and as crossly to the reason of things as can be imagined, to regard time as if it were eternity, and to neglect eternity as if it were but a short time. Do we count him a wise man who is wise in anything but in his own proper profession and employment, wise for everybody but himself, who is ingenious to contrive his own misery and to do himself a mischief, but is dull and stupid as to the designing of any real benefit and advantage to himself? Such a one is he who is ingenious in his calling, but a bad Christian; for Christianity is more our proper calling and profession than the very trades we live upon; and such is every sinner, who is "wise to do evil, but to do good hath no understanding." . . . Is not he an imprudent man who, in matters of greatest moment and concernment, neglects opportunities never to be retrieved; who, standing upon the shore, and seeing the tide making haste towards him apace, and that he hath but a few minutes to save himself, yet will lay himself to sleep there till the cruel sea rush in upon him and overwhelm him? And is he any better who trifles away this day of God's grace and patience, and foolishly adjourns the necessary work of repentance and the weighty business of religion to

child receives the greatest share of her thought and attention. It is not the one who is strong, and able to take care of himself, but the sickly and weak one that is pressed closest to the mother's heart. So with God. Oh, ye trembling ones, take heart! Your weakness is your strength. "When I am weak, then am I strong." *b W. M. Punshon.*

a 2 Ki. xxi. 13; Is. xxviii. 17.

b See 2 Ki. xv. 10.

"One danger of secret sin is that a man cannot commit it without being by-and-by betrayed into a public sin. If a man commit one sin, it is like the melting of the lower glacier upon the Alps, the other must follow in time. As certainly as you heap one stone upon the cairn to-day, the next day you will cast another, until the heap reared stone by stone shall become a very pyramid. See the coral insect at work, you cannot decree where it shall stay its pile. It will not build its rock as high as you please; it will not stay until an island shall be created. Sin cannot be held in with bit and bridle, it must be mortified." —*Spurgeon.*

a dying hour? And to put an end to these questions, is he wise who hopes to attain the end without the means—nay, by means that are quite contrary to it? Such is every wicked man who hopes to be blessed hereafter without being holy here, and to be happy, that is, to find a pleasure, in the enjoyment of God and in the company of holy spirits by rendering himself as unsuitable and unlike to them as he can.[c]

10—13. (10) **priest of Beth-el,** so the idolatrous priest. **conspired,** *etc.*, he considered that Amos's preachings stirred up rebellion, esp. against the established national religion. (11) **Jeroboam,** but Amos's words applied to the *house of* Jeroboam, not to Jeroboam himself.[a] (12) **into .. Judah,** from whence Amos came. (13) **king's chapel,** or sanctuary. Bethel means God's house; it had become only the *king's* house.[b] It is a chief shrine of the recognised and authoritative national worship.

Washington and his friends.—An anecdote is told of the great Washington, which exhibits in a fine light the distinction between public duty and private friendship. During his administration as president, a gentleman, the friend and the companion of the general throughout the whole course of the revolutionary war, applied for a lucrative and very responsible office. The gentleman was at all times welcome to Washington's table. He had been to a certain degree necessary to the domestic repose of a man who had for seven years fought the battles of his country, and who had now undertaken the task of wielding her political energies. At all times, and in all places, Washington regarded his revolutionary associate with an eye of evident partiality and kindness. He was a jovial, pleasant, and unobtrusive companion. In applying for this office, it was accordingly in the full confidence of success; and his friends already cheered him on the prospect of his arrival at competency and ease. The opponent of this gentleman was known to be decidedly hostile to the politics of Washington; he had even made himself conspicuous among the ranks of opposition. He had, however, the temerity to stand as candidate for the office to which the friend and the favourite of Washington aspired. He had nothing to urge in favour of his pretensions, but strong integrity, promptitude, and fidelity in business, and every quality which, if called into exercise, would render service to the State. Every one considered the application of this man hopeless. No glittering testimonial of merit had he to present to the eye of Washington; he was known to be his political enemy; he was opposed by a favourite of the general's; and yet, with such fearful odds, he dared to stand as candidate. What was the result? The enemy of Washington was appointed to the office, and his table companion was left destitute and dejected. A mutual friend, who interested himself in the affair, ventured to remonstrate with the President on the injustice of his appointment. "My friend," said he, "I receive with a cordial welcome to my house, and welcome to my heart; but, with all his good qualities, he is not a man of business. His opponent is, with all his political hostility to me, a man of business; my private feelings have nothing to do in this case. I am not George Washington, but President of the United States. As George Washington, I would do this man any kindness in my power; but as President of the United States, I can do nothing."[c]

c Abp. Tillotson.

a "Had he really predicted the king's violent death, a jealous ruler might have suspected him of treason, of taking measures to make his words good. Hence this perversion of his prophecy by Amaziah."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Bethel is the place where the king performs his religious worship in person, and often resides there with his court, that he may the better attend upon the service performed at this place."—*Lowth.*

"As he that is to pass over some broad and deep river must not look downward to the current of the stream, but must set his foot sure, and keep his eye on the bank, on the farther shore; so he that draws near death must look over the waves of death, and fix his eye of faith on eternal life."—*Cawdray.*

c R. T. S.

14, 15. (14) **no prophet,**[a] in the sense of properly belonging to the order of the prophets. **herdman,** ch i. 1.[b] **gatherer . . fruit,** a dresser, or cultivator of sycamores.[c] Only the poor gather and use these sycamore figs. (15) **took me,** separating him from his common avocation by a special Divine call.

The sycamore.—The sycamore buds in the latter end of March, and the prolific fruit ripens in the beginning of June. Pliny and other natural historians allege that it continues immature till it is rubbed with iron combs, after which it ripens in four days. Is it not an operation of this kind to which the Prophet Amos refers, in the text which we translate, "I was a gatherer of sycamore fruit"? The Septuagint seems to refer it to something done to the fruit, to hasten its maturity; probably to the action of the iron comb, without an application of which the figs cannot be eaten, because of their intolerable bitterness. Parkhurst renders the phrase, a scraper of sycamore fruit; which he contends, from the united testimony of natural historians, is the true meaning of the original term. The business of Amos, then, before his appointment to the prophetical office, was to scrape or wound the fruit of the sycamore tree, to hasten its maturity and prepare it for use. Simon renders it a cultivator of sycamore fruit, which is perhaps the preferable meaning; for it appears that the cultivation of this fig required a variety of operations, all of which it is reasonable to suppose were performed by the same persons. To render the tree fruitful, they scarified the bark, through which a kind of milky liquor continually distilled. This, it is said, causes a little bough to be formed without leaves, having upon it sometimes six or seven figs. They are hollow, without grains, and contain a little yellow matter, which is generally a nest of grubs. At their extremity, a sort of water collects, which, as it prevents them from ripening, must be let out. Amos, it is probable, was employed in these various operations; which has induced Simon and others to render the words, not a gatherer of sycamore fruit, but a dresser of the sycamore tree; which includes all the culture and attendance it requires. The sycamore is a large spreading tree, sometimes shooting up to a considerable height, and so thick that three men can hardly grasp the trunk; according to Hasselquist, the stem is often fifty feet thick. This unfolds the reason why Zaccheus climbed up into a sycamore tree, to get a sight of his Redeemer. The incident also furnishes a proof that the sycamore was still common in Palestine; for this tree stood to protect the traveller by the side of the highway.[d]

16, 17. (16) **hear thou,** addressed to Amaziah, *v.* 12. **drop . . word,** *comp.* De. xxxii. 2; Job xxix. 22. The expression probably means, to instil doctrine by gentle degrees.[a] **house of Isaac,** *comp. v.* 9. Prob. a recognised name for Beersheba, a chief centre of the calf worship. (17) **therefore,** as a judgment for trying to silence God's Prophet. **wife,** *etc.*, reference is to the license and cruelty of the Assyrian conquerors. **divided by line,** *v.* 7; among the Assyrians. **polluted land,** foreign country defiled by the service of idols.

Samaria.—The wind was high when we left Acre, and blew the sand about with such violence that we had great difficulty in making our way. The bay to the southward extends to Mount Carmel, and we were three hours in skirting its shore. We first

a "Not a prophet by profession, nor bred up in the schools of the prophets, as those usually were who took that office upon them."—*Lowth.*

b Comp. Zec. xiii. 5.

"It is an arduous life, and those alone among the people pursue it who can find no easier mode of support."—*Van Lennep.*

c "The sycamore is a large tree, with a leaf like that of the mulberry tree, and fruit like a fig. The fruit is naturally bitter, and to remove this the bark is wounded at the time of budding, and the fruit is slightly scarified with an iron comb as it approaches to ripeness."—*Kitto.*

v. 14. *Dr. E. Challoner*, 55; *C. Wheatly*, i. 34.

d Paxton.

a "Possibly Amaziah had used this word in ridicule of the prophetic utterances of Amos."—*Wordsworth.*

"As from a steep and dreadful precipice the frighten'd traveller casts down his eyes, and sees the ocean at so great a distance,

it looks as if the skies were sunk beneath him. If then some neighb'ring shrub, how weak soever, peeps up, his willing eyes stop gladly there, and seem to ease themselves, and rest upon it."—*Dryden.*

"Perpetual spring our happy climate sees; twice breed the cattle, and twice bear the trees; and summer suns recede by slow degrees. Our land is from the rage of tigers freed, nor nourishes the lion's angry seed; nor poisonous aconite is here produced, or grows unknown, or is, when known, refused; nor in so vast a length our serpents glide, or raised on such a spiry volume ride."—*Dryden.*

[b] *Hardy.*

forded the river Belus, the sand of which has been much used in the making of glass, and then came to "that ancient river, the river Kishon," immortalised in the song of Deborah and Barak, over which we were ferried by a Jewish boatman. The saddles are never taken off the horses in these countries during a journey, either by day or night. They were now taken from the animals that they might not be wet in crossing the river, and the backs of the poor creatures had been so chafed by them, that I felt unwilling to mount mine again. After passing some sepulchres in the rocks we entered the town of Hypha, and were detained some time by the guard, until one of our party waited on the governor, and obtained our release. There were several brass cannon upon the walls, all ready for action. The vessels have here better shelter than at Acre, but the water is shallow. This town is nearly at the foot of Mount Carmel, which extends about 30 miles in a south-eastern direction from the sea, in nearly an equal ridge, and at an elevation of about 1,600 feet. It is often referred to in Scripture, and was once covered with trees, but it is now nearly bare, and "the excellency of Carmel" has withered before the curse of Heaven. It was the usual residence of the Prophets Elijah and Elisha. The place where the false prophets of Baal were discomfited and slain was towards the other extremity, nearer Jezreel, to which Ahab retired: and at some point near which it is approached by the Kishon. We may stand at the top of Carmel, as did Gehazi, and look towards the sea, but alas! there is now no "little cloud like a man's hand;" still there is the promise of a shower, and in due time the streams of Divine mercy will again fall upon this thirsty land, and men shall again liken themselves in their prosperity to "the excellency of Carmel and Sharon." Near the point that overlooks the sea there is a monastery of Carmelite friars. It was destroyed a few years ago by Abdullah Pacha, that he might convert the materials to his own use; and though he was ordered to rebuild it at his own expense by the sultan, when a proper representation of the circumstances had been made to his court, no attention was ever paid to the mandate. The monks are now rebuilding it themselves in a very splendid manner, and one of the fraternity is the architect. At a lower elevation on the same point is a palace recently erected by the pacha. There is a small building near the sea, said to cover the cave in which Elisha dwelt, but as the door was locked we could not gain admittance.[b]

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

[a] "In Heb. the words for *summer fruit* and *end* are very similar in sound (*kaïtz* and *ketz*), and are derived from a root that means to *cut off*."—*Spk. Com.*

Re. xiv. 18.

1—3. (1) **basket . . fruit,** *i.e.* of ripe fruit; to intimate that Israel was now quite ripe for judgment.[a] "The end of Israel is when its probation is over." (2) **my people,** even in judgment God acknowledges His relationship. **pass by,** ch. vii. 8. (3) **temple,** *i.e.* the idol palace, or temple, at Bethel. **howlings,** yellings of pain and despair. **with silence,** *i.e.* without any of the customary mournings and dirges. The figures intimate a very great slaughter.

Fruitfulness (*v.* 1).—I. Notice the figure of the text as applied to the harvest. 1. Fruit from the earth, God's bounty, not man's production; 2. Summer fruit, seasonable, in due time, ripened;

3. A basket, at man's disposal; 4. The Lord showed, etc., a reminder that thanks are due to the Giver. II. Notice the figure of the text as to its personal lessons. 1. Fruit is the result of cultivation; 2. The ripening fruit points to the coming of the end; 3. Suggestive of inquiries as to our own fruitfulness.[b]

b W. in *Analyst.*

4—7. (4) **swallow . . needy,**[a] better, "pant after them to devour them, like a dog or wild beast panting and yelping after his prey." **poor,** in the sense of the meek, the unresisting.[b] (5) **new . . corn?**[c] on the holy days trade was suspended. **sabbath,** Ne. xiii. 15, 16. **falsifying,** *etc.*, comp. Le. xix. 35—37. (6) **silver,** ch. ii. 6. **refuse,** making the poor buy what was not fit for human food. (7) **excellency of Jacob,** ch. vi. 8. **never forget,** God is said to remember when He punishes.[d]

a "The Prophet again addresses the proud, grasping nobles, and rebukes them for their avarice, their dishonesty, and their meanness."—*Spk. Com.*

b Isa. v. 8.

c Nu. xxviii. 11.

d Ho. viii. 13, ix. 9; Is. xliii. 25; Je. xxxi. 34.

Avarice (*vv.* 4—10).—I. It is execrable in its spirit. 1. It is sacrilegious; 2. Dishonest; 3. Cruel. II. It is abhorrent to Jehovah. 1. Repugnant to His nature; 2. Hostile to universal happiness. III. It is a curse to society.

Sabbath-breaking.—One Sabbath day two sons of a poor widow in Derbyshire, the elder sixteen, and the younger thirteen years of age, went to slide on some ice at a short distance from home. Before they left their habitation, they had been requested by their mother to accompany her to the house of God, and, whilst on the ice, were warned of their danger by a person who passed by, and knew the depth of the water. But, alas! their mother's pious request and the seasonable warning of their neighbour were both in vain. In a little time the ice gave way; and, awful to relate, clasped in each other's arms they sank to rise no more! Thus were these youthful Sabbath-breakers called to stand before the judgment-seat of that Almighty Being, who has said, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."[e]

v. 5. *J. C. Dieteric*, 726; *Bp. Ravenscroft*, i. 95; *Hon. G. C. Perceval*, iii. 55.

e Whitecross.

8—10. (8) **for this,** *i.e.* for all this wickedness of the nobles. **it shall rise,** better, shall it not rise? referring to the desolations of the Divine judgment. **as . . Egypt,** "swept away and overwhelmed, as the land adjoining the Nile is by it when flooding."[a] (9) **sun . . noon,** the figure of an eclipse is taken to represent public calamity.[b] (10) **sackcloth,** *etc.*, all these terms indicate a time of terrible national trouble.[c] **only son,** the greatest of family sorrows.

A Hindoo tradition.—The Hindoos have a tradition that this world was once united to the fountain of light and life—a scene of undisturbed peace and of untainted purity; that by sin it was severed from its fountain, and like a heaven-stricken spirit has been ever since plunging deeper and deeper into the abyss of darkness, and will continue to sink till gross darkness, literal darkness, has entirely enveloped it; when some benign spirit, invoked by the cry of the wretches that were suffering from this state of degradation, would rise, lay his grasp upon the wandering orb, and lift it up, and unite it again to the source—the original source of light and purity.[d]

a Fausset.

b "There were two great eclipses of the sun about eleven years after the time that Amos prophesied... Calamitous times are expressed by the failing of the light of the sun, and the day's being overspread with darkness."—*Lowth.* Is. xiii. 10; Mi iii. 6.

c Is. xv. 2; Je. xlviii. 37; Eze. vii. 18.

v. 9. *A. Roberts*, ii. 127.

d Evangelical Magazine.

11—14. (11) **famine,** *etc.*, this was a just retribution on those who would not hear the word of the Lord as spoken by Amos.[a] (12) **wander,** *etc.*, from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean, *i.e.* all through the land. Nowhere should any prophet of the Lord

a Pr. xxix. 18; Ps. lxxiv. 9; Eze. vii. 26.

be found. (13) **fair virgins**, from the general suffering not even the loveliest, the strongest, and the best should be exempted. (14) **sin of Samaria,**[b] wh. was its idol calf. **thy god**, better put in swearing form, "By the life of thy god, O Dan."[c] **the manner**, *etc.*, better, "By the life of the way of Beersheba." The way of Beersheba is the religion there practised.

Religious sincerity (*v.* 14).—The words suggest a word or two in relation to religious sincerity. I. That religious sincerity is no proof of the accuracy of religious creed. II. And is no protection against the punishment that follows error.[d]

b Ho. viii. 5, 6.

c "The god of Dan was the golden calf set up there by Jeroboam. 1 Ki. xii. 29."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 11. *W. Jay*, iii. 18; *Dr. T. Taylor*, 207; *J. Saurin*, vi. 44.

d *Dr. Thomas.*

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—4. (1) **altar**, prob. that at Samaria, or Bethel.[a] The Lord doubtless appeared as a fire, or a cloud. **he said**, to the avenging angel, commissioned to carry out His judgments. Some think that the command was given to the Prophet. **lintel**, capital, ornamental head of a column. This indicates the approaching ruin of the temple. **cut . . head**, *viz.* with the broken fragments of the capitals and columns.[b] (2) **dig into hell**, fig. for hiding themselves in the deepest holes and caves.[c] **climb . . heaven**, fig. for the most inaccessible heights. (3) **Carmel**, famous for its thick forests. **serpent**, fig. for calamity, and punishment. (4) **go into captivity**, or voluntarily surrender themselves.

Great sins, great calamities, great efforts (*vv.* 1—4).—I. That under the righteous government of God great sin exposes to great calamity. II. The consciousness of great calamities will stimulate to great efforts for escape. III. The greatest efforts to escape must prove utterly futile when God has given the sinner up.[d]

Sin brought to remembrance.—Not many years since a large steam vessel, crossing the Atlantic Ocean, was caught in a fearful storm, and wrecked. All on board perished except a few, who, clinging to portions of the wreck, were rescued by a passing vessel, and brought safely to land. One of the survivors relates that, during the time he was thus floating on the water, lashed to a spar, now engulphed in the roaring waves, then violently cast to the surface, expecting every moment to be his last, there seemed continually ringing in his ears the inquiry, "Tom, did you steal sister's grapes?" "Tom, did you steal sister's grapes?" The hurricane raged around him, the wind howling in fearful blasts, which blended with crashing peals of thunder; but, loud and clear above the tumult of the storm, again he heard a well-known voice inquire, "Tom, did you steal sister's grapes?" He had heard that question before, but many years had passed since then. He had grown to man's estate, travelled over many lands, and had passed through strange adventures and vicissitudes, and amidst the change and turmoil of active life had entirely forgotten it; but now that he was upon the very verge of eternity, his senses, oblivious of every other event, unmoved by the peril of his position, were absorbed in the thrilling reminiscences awakened by this appeal. The words recalled with all the vividness of yesterday the incident that occasioned them. Whilst yet a lad, his sister was dangerously ill, and a neighbour

a Am. iii. 14.

b The people are conceived as fleeing from the Assyrians, and seeking protection in the temple at Bethel. There, however, they would perish in the overthrow of the temple.

c "Like most other caves in Egypt, the caves of Beni Hassan contain deep pits, in which the dead are deposited."—*Gadsby.*

v. 2. *Bp. Hacket*, 742.

d *Dr. Thomas.*

The sea serpent, or snake, though frequently seen by the fishermen of the rivers in India, was usually supposed to have been harmless. Mr. Meek, a late missionary, informs us that a young fisherman had caught one entangled in his net, but when seeking to disengage it, his finger was bitten; nothing was thought of the matter for some hours; at length great pain ensued, which was followed by giddiness, vomiting, dimness of sight,

kindly sent some grapes to cool and moisten her dry and feverish lips. These his mother put aside for use during the weary watches of the night; but the boy, though well acquainted with the purpose for which they were sent, stole and ate them. They were not missed until required late in the evening; and then, his mother coming to his bedside gently shook him, and in tones of tender rebuke asked, "Tom, did you steal sister's grapes?" As he opened his eyes, the light of the candle shining on her face, he saw the tears trickling down her cheeks, and, muttering some partial confession of his fault, lay expecting further reproach, if not punishment; but, without another word, she sorrowfully retired: and now, with nothing in the circumstances by which he was surrounded to recall it—alone—buffeted hither and thither on the waves of the Atlantic, this sin of his boyhood was rising up in judgment against him.

and convulsion. Death terminated the poor man's sufferings about twenty-four hours after he had been bitten. Subsequently a second person was bitten, but ultimately recovered.

"The mountains are nature's monuments." — *Dr. J. Hamilton.*

5, 6. (5) **toucheth**, only a touch sufficed. **melt**, even the stoutest hearts being filled with fear. **rise**, *etc.*, ch. viii. 8.[a] (6) **stories**, better, *steps*, those of His throne. **troop**, or vault;[b] perhaps, canopy of His throne. Some think *troop* means "all animate creatures."

Carmel.—Carmel was one of the barriers of the promised land, which Sennacherib boasted he would scale with the multitude of his horses and his chariots: "I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel." Ungrateful as the soil of this mountain is, the wild vines and olive trees that are still found among the brambles which encumber its declivities prove that the hand of industry has not laboured among the rocks of Carmel in vain. So well adapted were the sides of this mountain to the cultivation of the vine, that the kings of Judah covered every improvable spot with vineyards and plantations of olives. Its deep and entangled forests, its savage rocks and lofty summit, have been in all ages the favourite retreat of the guilty or the oppressed. The fastnesses of this rugged mountain are so difficult of access that the Prophet Amos classes them with the deeps of hell, the height of heaven, and the bottom of the sea. The Church, in her most affluent state, is compared to a fugitive lurking in the deep recesses of this mountain: "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thy heritage which dwell solitarily in the midst of Carmel." Lebanon raises to heaven a summit of naked and barren rocks, covered for the greater part of the year with snow; but the top of Carmel, how naked and sterile soever its present condition, seems to have been clothed with verdure in the days of Amos, which seldom was known to fade: "And he said, The Lord will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem, and the habitation of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither."[c]

a "In 1818 the great traveller, Belzoni, was eye-witness to a most deplorable scene. The waters rose 3ft. higher than their wont, and swept away several villages, and hundreds of people and cattle. As the river rose unusually fast, the people had anticipated the result, and had protected their villages with walls, formed of the mould; but wherever these embankments were broken down, inevitable destruction followed."—*Gadsby.*

b Maurer.

"Mammon has enriched his thousands, and has damned his ten thousands." —*Dr. South.*

c Paxton.

7—10. (7) **as . . Ethiopians**, *i.e.* Are ye not under the curse, even as they? **have not I**, the pronoun I is here emphatic. **from Caphtor**, Je. xlvii. 4. **Kir**, ch. i. 5. (8) **eyes**, *etc.*, *v.* 4. **sinful kingdom**, *i.e.* the separate kingdom of the ten tribes, founded by Jeroboam. (9) **sift**, "a beautiful image, representing clearly God's beneficent design in the captivity and dispersion of Israel."[a] (10) **sinners** here the

a Wordsworth.

"I will cause the Israelites to be tossed about through all nations as corn is shaken about in a sieve, in such a

way, however, that whilst the chaff and dust (the wicked) fall through and perish, all the solid grains (the godly elect) remain (are preserved)."—*Fausset.*

presumptuous ones. overtake us, press on us from *behind.* prevent, impede us by getting in the way *before* us.

Judgment and mercy (*v.* 9).—I. The determination avowed. 1. The comparison employed points to the only distinction of character recognised in Scripture—the righteous and the wicked; 2. The character of the individual Christian is not one of unmingled purity; 3. The mixture of character which exists in the Church of God; 4. Consider the process—sifting. II. The security promised. 1. The process has exclusive reference to the wheat; 2. The security arises from God's care over His people in affliction—this care arises out of His love for them—this love and care extends to all, even the least. III. Inferences. 1. The safety of true believers amidst surrounding troubles; 2. Learn to recognise the hand of God in all events.

[a] Comp. Nu. xxiv. 18.

11, 12. (11) tabernacle, or house and family of David. The word *tent*, or *booth*, indicates the low condition into which Dav.'s house had fallen. breaches, with prob. allusion to the separation of the kingdom of David into two parts. (12) Edom, ch. i. 12.[a]

v. 11. *E. Erskine*, ii. 386; *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 300.

Conversion of Jews and Gentiles (*vv.* 11, 12).—Let us consider—I. The import of the prophecy. 1. The return of the Jews from Babylon; 2. The conversion of the Gentiles; 3. The future restoration of the Jews, and their union with the Gentiles in one universal Church. II. The encouragement to be derived from it. 1. In relation to individuals; 2. In relation to the world at large.[b]

[b] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

13—15. (13) ploughman, *etc.*, "There is to be no interval between ploughing and harvest, and the vintage is to last till next year's sowing."[a] (14) bring again, De. xxx. 3. (15) plant them, *etc.*, it is generally assumed that these promises refer to a yet unfulfilled restoration of Israel.[b]

[a] *Spk. Com.* Le. xxvi. 5.

[b] "The kingdom of the Messiah shall take such deep rooting in the world as never to be rooted out of it."—*Mat. Henry.* Is. lx. 21; Je. xxxii. 41; Eze. xxxiv. 28; Joel iii. 20, 21.

Harvest in the East.—The Arabs commit depredations of every description. They strip the trees of their fruit even in its unripe state, as well as seize on the seed and corn of the husbandman. Maillet ascribes the alteration for the worse, that is found in the wine of a province in Egypt. to the precipitation with which they now gather the grapes. This was done to save them from the Arabs, "who frequently made excursions into it, especially in the season in which the fruits begin to ripen. It is to save them from these depredations that the inhabitants of the country gather them before they come to maturity." It is this circumstance that must explain this passage of the Prophet: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt:" that is, the days shall come when the grapes shall not be gathered, as they were before, in a state of immaturity, for fear of Arabs, or other destroying nations, but they shall be suffered to hang till the time of ploughing; so perfect shall be the security of these times.[c]

"We should enjoy more peace if we did not busy ourselves with the words and deeds of other men, which appertain not to our charge."—*Taylor.*

[c] *Harmer.*

OBADIAH.

Introduction.

I. Author. OBADIAH, = "*servant of Jehovah.*" Nothing is certainly known of him, but Jerome and the Jews are of opinion that he was the same person who was governor of Ahab's house, and who hid and fed one hundred prophets whom Jezebel would have destroyed; this, however, is not likely. **II. Time.** B.C. 588—583. Expositors are not agreed concerning the date. The whole question turns upon the interpretation of vv. 11—14, which contain an historic allusion to the exultation of the Edomites over the capture and plunder of Jerusalem. If this was the final capture of the city by the Chaldæans, then Obadiah's place will be after the beginning of the Babylonish captivity. **III. Style.** The style of Obadiah is animated, and his prophecy orderly and picturesque. **IV. Theme.** He first denounces judgment against Edom (1—9), then (10—16) dwells upon the special sin committed, the malicious joy with which the Edomites had abetted Judah's enemies (comp. Ps. cxxxvii. 7), reiterating the threatening; and afterwards (17—21), he describes the restoration of Jewish prosperity, their dominion being largely extended. The accomplishment of the earlier part of the prophecy took place about five years after the taking of Jerusalem, that of the latter in the victories of the Maccabean princes; this has, however, no doubt its fullest completion in the establishment of Messiah's kingdom.

Synopsis.

(According to Horne.)

The Prophecy of Obadiah consists of two parts.

PART I. This part is minatory, and denounces the destruction of Edom for their pride and carnal security .....1—9

And for their cruel insults and enmity to the Jews after the capture of their city..10—16

This prediction, according to Archbishop Usher, was fulfilled about five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, by the Babylonians subduing and expelling them from Arabia Petræa, of which they never afterwards recovered possession.

PART II. This part is consolatory, and foretells the restoration of the Jews.....17

Archbishop Newcome considers this prophecy as fulfilled by the conquests of the Maccabees over the Edomites
1 Macc. v. 3—5, 65, etc.

There is no doubt that it was in part accomplished by the return from the Babylonian captivity, and by the victories of the Maccabæan princes; but the prediction in the last verse will not receive its complete fulfilment until that time when the "kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15).

Their victory over their enemies, and their flourishing state in consequence....18-21

1, 2. (1) **Obadiah,** "Servant of Jehovah." **Lord God,** *Heb.* Adonai Jehovah. "This is the formula claiming Divine authority for the whole prophecy." **we . . rumour,**[a] I and my people. **is sent,** *i.e.* already sent, to call the nations to execute God's judgments. (2) **small,**[b] regarded as contemptible, a nation that can be easily overthrown. "Edom then extended from Dedan of Arabia to Bezrah in the N."

Origin of ambassadors.—The interests of commerce have frequently made it necessary to maintain ambassadors or agents in foreign countries, where the purposes either of war or alliance would not have required any. The commerce of the Turkey Company first occasioned the establishment of an ordinary ambassador at Constantinople. The first English embassies to Russia arose altogether from commercial interests. The constant interference which those interests necessarily occasioned between the subjects of the different states of Europe, has introduced the custom of keeping in all neighbouring countries ambassadors or ministers, constantly resident, even in the time of peace. This custom, unknown to ancient times, is not older than the beginning of the sixteenth century; that is, than the time when commerce first began to extend itself to the greater part of the nations of Europe, and when they began to attend to its interests.[c]

3—6. (3) **dwellest . . rock,** the great Edomite capital Selah, or Petra, is here referred to; one of the most curious and wonderful cities on the earth; consisting exclusively of houses and temples cut in the solid rock.[a] The word *clefts* should be *fastnesses.* (4) **exalt,** *etc.*, Je. xlix. 16. **among the stars,** fig. for seemingly inaccessible height. (5) **thieves,** *etc.*, Je. xlix. 9. **how . . off!** this exclamation, bursting in amidst the words of the image, marks strongly excited feeling. (6) **how . . searched out!** the Prophet sees the hostile soldiers seeking booty.[b]

Growth of presumption.—This is the nature and quality of presumption,—much like what our Saviour says of the mustard-seed, which, at first, is the least of all seeds, but, being grown up, is greater than all herbs, so that the birds of the air lodge in the branches of it. In like manner, presumption first sows itself in a thought, the least of all sins for the matter of it; but from thence shooting up into a custom and an habitual practice, it grows mighty and wide, opens its arms and spreads out its branches for every unclean bird, every sinful action and abomination, to come and lodge and rest upon.[c]

7—9. (7) **men . . confederacy,** *i.e.* thy allies. **laid a wound,** or treacherously assaulted you: or had their secret understandings with your foes. (8) **wise men,** Edom seems to have been proverbial for its wisdom.[a] **mount of Esau,** Mount Seir. (9) **dismayed,** so as to be unable to offer effective resistance.

The wisdom of Edom.—Fallen and despised as now it is, Edom, did not the proscription of many ages abrogate its right, might

a Je. xlix. 14.

b "Thy reduction to insignificance is as sure as if it were already accomplished. Therefore the past tense is used."—*Maurer.*

See *Dr. G. Croft,* ii. 138.

"The mob is a monster with the hands of Briareus, but the head of Polyphemus, strong to execute, but blind to perceive."—*Colton.*

c Percy Anec.

a "Selah was situated on either side of a deep ravine, wh. runs winding like a stream through precipitous and overhanging cliffs, for a distance of not less than a mile and a half. The cliffs are honeycombed with caverns, and in these caverns, reached by artificial means of access, the Edomites dwelt."—*Spk. Com.*

b Je. xlix. 10.

c Dr. South.

a "The wanderers in that region are sunk in the grossest folly, regarding the ruins around them as the work of evil spirits. Travellers assert that the minds of the Bedouins are as

bare and uncultivated as the deserts they traverse."—*Biblical Things.*

"Our Sheikh Hassan has never known a Bedouin who could read; he had only heard that there were some in the far East."—*Robinson.*

"These prophecies against Edom portray a state of desolation and ruin the most absolute and irretrievable, such as prob. no portion of the globe once populous and fertile now exhibits."—*Olive.*

"The time shall come when every evil thing from being and remembrance both shall die; the world one solid temple of pure good."—*Bailey.*

"Metaphysicians have been learning their lesson for the last four thousand years; and it is now high time that they should begin to teach us something. Can any of the tribe inform us why all the operations of the mind are carried on with undiminished strength and activity in dreams, except the judgment, wh. alone is suspended and dormant?"—*Colton.*

lay claim to the title of having been the first seat of learning, as well as the centre of commerce. Sir Isaac Newton, who was no mean master in chronology, and no incompetent judge to give a decision in regard to the rise and first progress of literature, considers Edom as the nursery of the arts and sciences, and adduces evidence to that effect from profane as well as from sacred history. "The Egyptians," he remarks, "having learned the skill of the Edomites, began now to observe the position of the stars, and the length of the solar year, for enabling them to know the position of the stars at any time, and to sail by them at all times without sight of the shore, and this gave a beginning to astronomy and navigation." It seems that letters, and astronomy, and the trade of carpenters, were invented by the merchants of the Red Sea, and that they were propagated from Arabia Petræa into Egypt, Chaldæa, Syria, Asia Minor, and Europe. While the philosopher may thus think of Edom with respect, neither the admirer of genius, the man of feeling, nor the child of devotion will, even to this day, seek from any land a richer treasure of plaintive poetry, of impassioned eloquence, and of fervid piety, than Edom has bequeathed to the world in the Book of Job. It exhibits to us, in language the most pathetic and sublime, all that a man could feel, in the outward pangs of his body and the inner writhings of his mind, of the frailties of his frame, and of the dissolution of his earthly comforts and endearments; all that mortal can discern, by meditating on the ways and contemplating the works of God, of the omniscience and omnipotence of the Most High, and of the inscrutable dispensations of His providence; all that knowledge which could first tell, in written word, of Arcturus, and Orion, and the Pleiades; and all that devotedness of soul, and immortality of hope, which, with patience that faltered not even when the heart was bruised and almost broken, and the body covered over with distress, could say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." But if the question now be asked, Is understanding perished out of Edom? the answer, like every response of the prophetic word, may be briefly given: It is. The minds of the Bedouins are as uncultivated as the deserts they traverse. Practical wisdom is, in general, the first that man learns, and the last that he retains. And the simple but significant fact, already alluded to, that the clearing away of a little rubbish, merely "to allow the water to flow" into an ancient cistern, in order to render it useful to themselves, "is an undertaking far beyond the views of the wandering Arabs," shows that understanding is indeed perished from among them. They view the indestructible works of former ages not only with wonder, but with superstitious regard, and consider them the work of genii. They look upon a European traveller as a magician, and believe that, having seen any spot where they imagine that treasures are deposited, he can afterward command the guardian of the treasure to set the whole before him. In Teman, which yet maintains a precarious existence, the inhabitants possess the desire without the means of knowledge. The Koran is their only study, and contains the sum of their wisdom. And, although he was but a "miserable comforter," and was overmastered in argument by a kinsman stricken with affliction, yet no Temanite can now discourse with either the wisdom or the pathos of Eliphaz of old.

Wisdom is no more in Teman, and understanding has perished out of the Mount of Esau.

10—12. (10) **violence**, Ge. xxvii. 41; Eze. xxxv. 5; Am. i. 11. **cut off for ever**, the Nabathæans drove the Edomites out of their ancient possessions, and these they have never since regained. (11) **on the other side**, meaning, in a position of hostility; showing no brotherly feeling in the time of Israel's calamity. (12) **but**, *etc.*, better and more forcibly rend. "Do not look . . . do not rejoice . . . do not enter . . . do not deliver."[a] **became a stranger**, or was treated cruelly as a stranger.

Edom.—While there is thus subsisting evidence and proof that the ancient inhabitants of Edom were renowned for wisdom as well as for power, and while desolation has spread so widely over it that it can scarcely be said to be inhabited by man, there still are tenants who hold possession of it, to whom it was abandoned by man, and to whom it was decreed by a voice more than mortal. And insignificant and minute as it may possibly appear to those who reject the light of revelation, or to the unreflecting mind (that will use no measuring-line of truth which stretches beyond that which inches out its own shallow thoughts, and wherewith, rejecting all other aid, it tries, by the superficial touch of ridicule alone, to sound the unfathomable depths of infinite wisdom), yet the following Scripture, mingled with other words already verified as the voice of inspiration, and voluntarily involving its title to credibility in the appended appeal to fact and challenge to investigation, may, in conjunction with kindred proofs, yet tell to man—if hearing he will hear, and show him, if seeing he will see—the verity of the Divine word, and the infallibility of the Divine judgments; and, not without the aid of the rightful and unbiassed exercise of reason, may give understanding to the sceptic that he may be converted, and that he may be healed by Him whose word is ever truth.

[a] "The words are addressed to Edomites by way of apostrophe on what he sees them doing before his face, not as a warning against their so doing in future."—*Spk. Com.*

"I saw two men fighting together till a third, casually passing by, interposed himself to part them; the blows of one fell on his face, of the other on his back, of both on his body, being the screen betwixt the fiery anger of the two fighters. Some of the beholders laughed at him as well enough served for meddling with matters which belonged not to him." — *Thomas Fuller.*

13, 14. (13) **substance**, trans. forces in *v.* 11. (14) **cross-way**, narrow mountain passes:[a] side roads by wh. the fleeing Israelites hoped to escape. These the Edomites closed, securing and delivering up the fugitives.

[a] *Maurer.*

"The thought of death sits easy on the man who has been born and dies among the mountains."—*Wordsworth.*

My neighbour.—

Thy neighbour? 'Tis that toiling slave,
Fetter'd in thought and limb,
Whose hopes are all beyond the grave:
Go thou and ransom him.

Thy neighbour? 'Tis that weary man
Whose years are at the brim,
Bent down by sickness, care, and pain:
Go thou and comfort him.

Thy neighbour? 'Tis the fainting poor,
Whose eyes with want are dim,
Whom hunger drives from door to door:
Go thou and cherish him.[b]

[b] *Montgomery.*

15, 16. (15) **heathen**, nations surrounding Israel, and at enmity with God's people. **as . . thee**, Eze. xxxv. 15; Ha. ii. 8. (16) **drunk**, perhaps meaning, "held drinking carousals, rejoicing over the defeat of the Jews." **drink**, for themselves

[a] "God's judgments are commonly represented by a cup of intoxicating liquors."—*Lowth.*

the cup of God's wrath.[a] swallow down, the figure of greediness.

London.—The metropolis of the British empire, the largest city the world ever saw, covers, within 15 miles' radius of Charing-cross, nearly 700 square miles, and numbers within these boundaries 4,000,000 of inhabitants. It comprises 100,000 foreigners from every region of the globe. It contains more Jews than the whole of Palestine, more Roman Catholics than Rome itself, more Irish than Dublin, more Scotchmen than Edinburgh. The port of London has every day on its waters 1,000 ships and 9,000 sailors. Upwards of 120 persons are added to the population daily, or 40,000 yearly, a birth taking place every 5 minutes, and a death every 8 minutes. On an average, 28 miles of streets are opened, and 9,000 houses built every year. In its postal districts there is a yearly delivery of 238 millions of letters. On the police register there are the names of 120,000 habitual criminals, increasing by many thousands every year. More than one-third of all the crime of the country is committed in London, or at least brought to light there. There are as many beershops and gin-palaces as would, if their fronts were placed side by side, reach from Charing-cross to Portsmouth, a distance of 73 miles, and 38,000 drunkards are annually brought before its magistrates. The shops open on Sundays would form streets 60 miles long. It is estimated that there are above a million of the people who are practically heathen, wholly neglecting the ordinances of religion. At least 900 additional churches and chapels would be required for the wants of the people.[b]

17—19. (17) deliverance, or that wh. is escaped: implying a restoration of the exiles. holiness, where now is the profanation of the presence of idolaters. (18) Jacob .. Joseph, implying that the restoration would include exiles from both the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. stubble, *etc.*, this prophecy was fulfilled in the time of the Maccabees. (19) of the south, the Negeb, or southern district of Judah. plain, low country along the shores of the Mediterranean. Gilead, the region E. of Jordan.

Deliverance and holiness (*v.* 17).—I. Deliverance. 1. From Satan, sin, hell, the world, affliction; 2. He delivers suddenly, wonderfully, thoroughly; 3. Deliverance calls for praise, confidence. II. Holiness. This is the great design of their deliverance. 1. Signs of holiness, hatred of sin, etc.; 2. Means of holiness, devout use of Bible, faith in Christ.—*Blessed effects of the Gospel in the latter days* (*v.* 17).—I. The deliverance here spoken of. 1. It has already come to Zion: 2. It is also experienced yet daily; 3. But it will be yet more largely experienced in the latter days. II. Its never-failing attendant—holiness. 1. Found only in Zion; 2. Found there from the time of deliverance. III. Its ultimate effect—rest. 1. Believers do now enter into rest; 2. But the full possession of it is reserved for another world. Address—1. Those who oppose the Church of God; 2. Those who are looking for redemption in Jerusalem.[a]

Holiness.—In order to be the disciples of Christ, there is much that we must instantly renounce. It is a profession of holiness: it therefore demands the immediate renunciation of criminal and forbidden pleasures. The moment we become Christ's

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[b] *Leisure Hour.*

"Faith saves, and grace saves: faith as the instrument, and grace as the Divine efficacy; faith the channel, and grace the heavenly stream; faith the finger that touches the garment's fringe, and grace the virtue that pours from the Saviour's heart. Faith cannot scale the dreadful precipice from which Nature has fallen; but it can lay hold on the rope which grace has let down even into his hands from the top, and which will draw up again with all the burden faith can bind to it. And this is all the mystery of faith's saving. Christ reaches down from heaven, and faith reaches up from earth; and each hand grasps the other—one in weakness, the other in power."—*Dr. Hoge.*

[a] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"I have read of a man who sued a railway company for a cent. He believed it to be his right. The law gave him his right. Let the Christian be as tenacious for his right, which is, holiness complete and entire. Let him seek it in the covenant of grace; and what the law of the country did for that man, the law of grace in the court of heaven shall do for him. He

disciples, we commence a warfare with the flesh, engaging for its crucifixion, with all its sinful lusts and appetites. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts." To the severities of monastic discipline, in which the body is torn in scourges, and emaciated by abstaining from the nourishment required to sustain it in health and vigour, the religion of Christ is a stranger: "For every creature of God is good, if it be received with thanksgiving." But a soft, voluptuous, and sensual life is repugnant, not only to the example of Christ, but to the whole genius and spirit of His institutes. By His Gospel, and by His Son, God has "called us, not to uncleanness, but to holiness;" so that he that despiseth the precepts of purity, despiseth not man but God: "This is the will of God, even our sanctification, that every man should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour: not in the lust of concupiscence, as the Gentiles which know not God." However painful the sacrifice of forbidden gratifications may be, however deep and inveterate the habit of indulgence; though it may seem as necessary to us, and as much a part of ourselves, as the right hand, or the right eye, relinquished it must be, or we cannot be Christ's disciples.

20, 21. (20) **captivity**, *i.e.* those restored from the captivity. **Sepharad**, a district unknown. Poss. the Bosphorus. (21) **saviours**,[a] princes, judges, not a king, bec. the idea of the theocracy will be restored. **kingdom . . Lord's**, Re. xi. 15—17.

Salvation neglected.—Simply "neglect the great salvation," and you will make your everlasting ruin sure. Many foolish, faithless parents have stood by the grave of a child which they dug with their own hands. How? Did they administer slow poison, or strike an assassin knife through the young heart? No; but they killed their child just as surely by simple neglect of the first laws of health. Many a father, too, has wrung his hands in agony before a prison cell which held a ruined son, or over the letter which told him of a son's disgrace; and on those very hands rested the guilt of that boy's ruin. Why? Had they led that son into Sabbath-breaking, or theft, or profligacy? No; but they had let the youth alone, and left him to rush into them unrestrained. Neglect was the boy's ruin. There is no need that the man in a skiff amid Niagara's rapids should row towards the cataract: resting on his oars is quite enough to send him over the awful verge.[b]

Advantage of promptitude.—On the narrow ledges of the Yorkshire coast multitudes of sea fowl lay their eggs. By gathering them some persons obtain a perilous livelihood. It once happened that a man, having fixed in the ground his iron bar, and having lowered himself down by the rope which was fastened to it, found that in consequence of the edge of the cliff projecting beyond the part below, he could not reach the spot where the eggs were deposited. He therefore began to swing himself backwards and forwards. By this means he at last placed his foot on the rock, but in doing so he lost hold of the rope. His situation was most dreadful. The sea roared hundreds of feet below. It was impossible to climb either up or down. He must soon perish from want, or fall and be dashed to pieces on the rocks. The rope was his only way of escape. It was swinging to and fro. He saw that at each

shall have the utmost particle that is his due." —*John Bate.*

"There are some solitary creatures who seem to have left the rest of mankind, only to meet the devil in private." —*Adams.*

"The devil never tempts us with more success than when he tempts us with a sight of our own good actions." — *Bishop Wilson.*

a Deliverers, such as the Maccabean princes proved to be.

"Or we may understand the word in a spiritual sense, for the preachers of salvation, whose office it is to convert unbelievers and aliens to the commonwealth of Israel." —*Lowth.*

b Cuyler.

"The world is an old woman, that mistakes any gilt farthing for a gold coin; whereby, being often cheated, she will henceforth trust nothing but the common copper." —*Carlyle.*

"Magnanimity is greatness of soul; a disposition of mind exerted in contemning dangers and difficulties, in scorning temptations, and despising earthly pomp and splendour." —*C. Buck.*

vibration it was further off than before; when it settled it would be out of reach. Every moment he waited his danger increased. He made up his mind. The next time the rope swung towards him he sprung forwards, seized it, and reached the top in safety.[c]

Influence of decision for Christ.—From *Eusebius* (Book VI.), Pressensé quotes the following fact:—"Under the persecution of Severus, a young girl named Potamiæna, of great beauty, was brought before the judges, and all manner of threats and entreaties employed to shake her firmness. She was warned that she would be tortured or subjected to yet more horrible sufferings, but she held her faith fast. Basilides, a soldier who led her out to suffer, was profoundly impressed by her courage, and protected her against the outrages of the people, until she was thrown into boiling pitch. Soon after he saw in a dream the young martyr smiling and triumphant. She seemed to put a crown on his head and assure him she had prayed for him. He, under this impression, not unnatural in a time of such excitement, resolved to win such a crown and confess Christ. Soon an opportunity offered. He refused to take a pagan oath, and owned the Saviour before his comrades in arms, and in a few days a violent death sent him into the presence of the Lord."—*Man of decision.*—The man will not re-examine his conclusions with endless repetition, and he will not be delayed long by consulting other persons, after he had ceased to consult himself. He cannot bear to sit still among unexecuted decisions and unattempted projects. We wait to hear of his achievements, and are confident we shall not wait long. The possibility or the means may not be obvious to us, but we know that everything will be attempted, and that a spirit of such determined will is like a river, which, in whatever manner it may be obstructed, will make its way somewhere. It must have cost Cæsar many anxious hours of deliberation before he decided to pass the Rubicon; but it is probable he suffered but few to elapse between the decision and the execution. And any one of his friends, who should have been apprised of his determination, and understood his character, would have smiled contemptuously to hear it insinuated that, though Cæsar had resolved, Cæsar would not dare; or that though he might cross the Rubicon, whose opposite bank presented to him no hostile legions, he might come to other rivers, which he would not cross; or that either rivers, or any other obstacles, would deter him from prosecuting his determination from this ominous commencement to its very last consequence.[d]

[c] *Newman Hall.*

"How comes it that the number of the disciples of Jesus is so small? That the clamours of those who sent Him to Calvary, so soon followed the hosannas of those who strewed His road with palms on His entry into Jerusalem? That scarcely one hundred and twenty of His disciples were assembled in the upper chamber, in expectation of the descent of the Holy Ghost? It is because the true disciples of Jesus are not those who are satisfied with admiring Him, with praising Him, with celebrating Him, who, externally, or to a certain point, follow Him. His true disciples are those who listen to Him internally and everywhere; who observe His precepts, who deny themselves, who take His cross on them, and follow Him everywhere." —*Bossuet.*

[d] *J. Foster.*

JONAH.

Introduction.

I. Author. JONAH, = *dove*. There are few particulars of the personal history of Jonah (see i. 1). The legend that he was the widow's son whom Elijah restored to life (1 Kings xvii. 17—20) is without foundation. **II. Time.** B.C. 856—784. **III. Theme.** The scope of this book is to show, by the very striking example of the Ninevites, the Divine forbearance and long-suffering towards sinners, who were spared on their sincere repentance. From the conduct of the Ninevites, Jesus Christ takes occasion to reprove the perfidiousness of the Jews (Matt. xii. 41). The evidence offered by Jonah was sufficient to convince and lead the former to repentance; while the Jews, who had the greater evidence of miracles, and the more convincing evidence of our Saviour's doctrine, continued obstinately impenitent. Some critics have imagined that the prophecy of Jonah is a parabolic history; but from the manner in which the sacred historians and Jesus Christ speak of him (2 Kings xiv. 25; Matt. xii. 39, 41, xvi. 4; Luke xi. 29), it is evident that this book is a true narrative of a real person, and that Jonah was a Prophet of considerable eminence.

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

The Book of Jonah consists of two parts.

PART I. This part contains the story of his first mission to Nineveh, and his attempt to flee to Tarshish, and its frustration, together with his delivery from the stomach of the great fish which had swallowed him.....chaps. i., ii.

PART II. Contains the story of his second mission, and its happy result to the Ninevites, who, in consequence of the Prophet's preaching, repented in dust and ashes .....chap. iii.

And the discontent of Jonah, who, dreading lest his veracity as a Prophet should be questioned in consequence of God's merciful change of purpose, repined at the sparing of the Ninevites whose destruction he seems to have expected chap. iv.

No reproof can be more gentle than that given by God to the murmuring Prophet 10, 11

Or present a more endearing picture of Him "whose tender mercies are over all His works."

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) **word . . Lord,**[a] Heb. *and* the word, implying a conscious connection with previous Scriptures. **Jonah,**[b] "a dove." The Greek form is *Jonas*. He was the earliest of the Prophets whose writings are preserved to us. **Amittai,** Heb. *truth*, or *truth-telling*. (2) **Nineveh,** Ge. x. 11. **great city,** "480 stadia in circuit, 150 in length, and 90 in breadth."[c] **cry,** as ch. iii. 4. **wickedness . . me,** Ge. vi. 11, 12, xviii. 20, 21. "Their wickedness is so great as to require my open interposition for punishment." (3) **flee,** *etc.*, seeking to get beyond the bounds of the holy land, and so, as it were, out of God's reach. **Tarshish,** Tartessus in Spain, the direction opposite to that of Nineveh.[d] **Joppa,** 2 Chr. ii. 16; Ac. ix. 43.

Jonah's flight (*v.* 3).—We have here—I. A man collapsing before the great occasions of life. II. A man rebelling against God, and yet strangely favoured by circumstances. III. A man dishonest with God, yet prompt and conscientious in observing the laws of social justice and equity. Apply:—1. The word of the Lord still comes to men; 2. When God calls a man to go to Nineveh, there is success or safety nowhere else; 3. To flee to Tarshish is a most terrible mistake, and must end in sorrow and disappointment, no matter how many ships may be waiting for us at Joppa; 4. Acts of morality cannot atone for disobedience to God's commands.[e]

Wrong-doing and its punishment.—We are tied to our duty like horses with a very long tether. So long as we are content with the allotted area, we are not troubled with the rope; but when we try to escape into the surrounding thicket, we are vexed with all kinds of entanglements. Mr. Beecher, in his *Life Thoughts*, says that "some troubles are God dragging us; and they would cease if we were to stand up and walk where God wishes us." It often happens that a man who has committed a crime takes his place secretly in a railway train, and is swiftly whirled away towards the sea-coast. But fast as he travels, there is something travelling faster, namely, the message along the telegraph wires; and when he hurries out, at the distant terminus, he is instantly grasped by officers of justice, who have been long in waiting. So God ofttimes meets startled sinners, who have been vainly trying to escape His notice and retribution. There was a man who committed a foul murder in a Scottish castle upon a young bridegroom, at whose marriage festivities he had hypocritically assisted. The assassin took horse in the dead of night, and fled for his life through wood and winding path. When the sun dawned, he slackened his pace, and behold! he was emerging from a thicket in front of the very castle whence he had fled, and to which, by tortuous paths, he had returned. Horror seized him; he was discovered, and condemned to death. So, however far and fast we may fly, we shall find ourselves, when light returns, ever in presence of our sin, and of our Judge.

4—6. (4) **sent out,** Heb. *cast forth*, implying God's absolute disposal of the wind. **ship . . broken,** *Heb.* "the ship thought

a "This phrase seems to represent 'the word of the Lord' as an atmosphere of kindling holy thought, a sphere of spiritual truth encompassing the Prophet, illuminating and moving his whole soul, and finally taking shape in language of exhortation, or prediction, or teaching, or resolve, as the case might be."—*Liddon.*

b 2 Ki. xiv. 25.

c *Diodorus Siculus.*

d "Jonah wished to get away to the furthest point westward that he knew of, so averse was he from the mission eastwards to Nineveh."—*Spk. Com.*

vv. 1, 2. *H. Smith*, 571; *F. Russell*, 231.

e *T. Kelly, M.A.*

vv. 1—4. *J. Foster*, ii. 1.

v. 2. *J. C. Dieteric, Ant.* 731; *R. Southgate*, ii. 175.

v. 3. *H. Smith*, 584.

"There is not a moment without some duty."—*Cicero.*

a "The living consciousness and apprehension

of the ship, fearing to be wrecked in the tempestuous sea, is set in striking contrast to the lethargic stupor of the Prophet, whose conscience was, as it were, entranced in a swoon."—*Wordsworth.*

b "Never was the conduct of a heathen crew during a storm more naturally and graphically described than it is in this passage. No sooner does danger appear, than one begins to beat his head, and cry aloud, 'Siva, Siva!' another beats his breast, and piteously shrieks forth 'Vishnoo!' and a third strikes his thigh, and shouts out with all his might, 'Varuna!' Thus do they cry to their gods, instead of doing their duty."—*Roberts.*

c "Sleep is no necessary proof of innocence; it may be the fruit of carnal security and a seared conscience."—*Fausset.*

vv. 4, 5. *H. Melvill*, 80.

v. 6. *Dr. R. Lucas*, ii. 195; *Dr. J. Orr*, i. 355; *Dr. H. Hunter*, ii. 43; *E. Cooper*, ii. 20; *Dr. E. Payson*, iii. 224.

d G. Brooks.

e Sir G. Staunton.

a 1 Sa. xiv. 42; Pr. xvi. 33.

b "The mariners sailing with Diagoras, an atheist, to be broken." or was in great peril of being wrecked.[a] (5) **mariners**, or sailors. They seem to have been of mixed nationalities, as they worshipped different gods; or we may suppose that each carried with him, as his protector, an idol figure.[b] **wares**, or cargo which they were carrying. **fast asleep**,[c] being tired out with his hurried journey from Gath-hepher. (6) **shipmaster**, or chief of the pilots. **thy God**, he did not know that Jonah's God was the *only* God.

A call to sleepers (*v.* 6).—I. Persons to whom this appeal may be addressed in a spiritual sense. 1. The indifferent; 2. The hardened; 3. The procrastinating. II. The considerations by which this appeal may be enforced. 1. Consider the value of the soul; 2. Consider the imminent hazard to which the soul is exposed; 3. Consider the price which has been paid for the soul. Appeal:—(1) Arise or be for ever fallen; (2) Call upon thy God; (3) Thou shalt be saved.[d]

Chinese superstition.—The amazing velocity with which the Yellow River runs at the place where the yacht and barges of the embassy were to cross it, rendered, according to the notions of the Chinese crews, a sacrifice necessary to the spirit of the river, in order to ensure a safe passage over it. For this purpose the master, surrounded by the crew of the yacht, assembled upon the forecastle, and holding as a victim in his hand a cock, wrung off his head, which committing to the stream, he consecrated the vessel with the blood spouting from the body by sprinkling it upon the deck, the masts, the anchors, and the doors of the apartments; and stuck upon them a few of the feathers of the bird. Several bowls of meat were then brought forward, and ranged in a line across the deck. Before these were placed a cup of oil, one filled with salt, one with tea, and a fourth with some ardent spirit; the captain making, at the same time, three profound inclinations of his body, with hands uplifted, and muttering a few words, as if of solicitation to the deity. The loo, or brazen drum, was beaten, in the meantime, forcibly; lighted matches were held towards heaven; papers, covered with tin or silver leaf, were burnt; and crackers fired off in great abundance by the crew. The captain afterwards made libations to the river, by emptying into it, from the vessel's prow, the several cups of liquids; and concluded with throwing in also that which held the salt. All the ceremonies being over, and the bowls of meat removed, the people feasted on it in the steerage, and launched afterwards, with confidence, the yacht into the current. As soon as she had reached the opposite shore, the captain returned thanks to heaven, with three inclinations of the body. Besides the daily offering and adoration at the altar erected on the left or honourable side of the cabin in every Chinese vessel, the solemn sacrifices above described are made to obtain the benefit of a fair wind, or to avert any impending danger. The particular spot upon the forecastle, where the principal ceremonies are performed, is not willingly suffered to be occupied or defiled any person on board.[e]

7—10. (7) **cast lots**, a usual method of referring things to the appointment or discovery of Providence.[a] **whose cause**, "Primitive tradition and natural conscience led even the heathen to believe that one guilty man involves all his associates, though innocent, in punishment.[b] (8) **what . . thou?** note the hurried

accumulation of questions. (9) **Hebrew**, prob. the name by wh. the Israelites were known to foreigners.[c] **Lord**, better rend. *Jehovah*. (10) **afraid**, bec. it was now plain that they were under Divine judgment.

Heathen superstition.—In a storm, the heathen mariners always conclude that there is some one on board who has committed a great crime, and they begin to inquire, "Who is the sinner?" Some time ago, a number of native vessels left the roads of Negapatam, at the same hour, for Point Pedro, in the Island of Ceylon; they had not been long at sea before it was perceived that one of them could not make any way; she rolled, and pitched, and veered about in every direction; but the other vessels went on beautifully before the wind. The captain and his crew began to look at the passengers, and at last fixed their eyes upon a poor woman, who was crouched in a corner of the hold; they inquired into her condition, and found she was in a state of impurity: "Let down the canoe," was the order, "and take this woman ashore;" in vain she remonstrated, she was compelled to enter, and was soon landed on the beach. "After this, the vessel sailed as well as any other!" When the storm rages, they make vows to their gods; one will go on a pilgrimage to some holy place, another will perform a penance, and a third will make a valuable present to his favourite temple. "Offered a sacrifice:" this is generally done when they get safe to shore, but I have been on board when they have offered cocoanuts, and other articles, with the greatest earnestness. To interfere with them is not always prudent; because, were it not from the hope they have from such offerings, they would cease to work the vessel.[d]

11—13. (11) **what . . thee**, their idea was that the avenging deity must be appeased with some *sacrifice*. **wrought**, *Heb.* "went and was tempestuous." (12) **cast . . sea**, as a Prophet he knew what God's will was in the matter. (13) **rowed**, Heb. *dug*. They tried prob. to get the ship back to Joppa.

Hard rowing (*vv.* 13, 14).—This unavailing effort of these oarsmen has a counterpart—I. In the efforts we are making to bring souls to the shore of safety, and set their feet on the Rock of Ages. II. To bring this world back to God, His pardon and safety. III. In every man that is trying to row his own soul into safety.[a]

Chinese superstition.—The following advertisement is copied from a Chinese newspaper: "Achen Tea Chinchin, sculptor, respectfully acquaints masters of ships, trading from Canton to India, that they may be furnished with figure-heads of any size, according to order, at one-fourth of the price charged in Europe. He also recommends, for private venture, the following idols, brass, gold, and silver: the hawk of Vishnoo, which has reliefs of his incarnation in a fish, boar, lion, and turtle. An Egyptian apis, a golden calf and bull, as worshipped by the pious followers of Zoroaster. Two silver mammosits, with golden ear-rings; an aprimanes for Persian worship; a ram, an alligator, a crab, a laughing hyæna, with a variety of household gods, on a small scale, calculated for family worship. Eighteen months' credit will be given, or a discount of 15 per cent. for prompt payment of the sum affixed to each article. Direct China-street, Canton, under the Marble Rhinoceros and Gilt Hydra."

attributed a storm that overtook them to his presence in the ship."—*Cicero.*

c "The word occurs in O. T. 33 times; whether in the mouth of heathen or Israelite, it always stands opposed to the notion, expressed or implied, of *Gentiles*."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 8. *J. Riddle, Bamp. Lec.* 184.

Magnanimity is sufficiently defined by its name; yet we may say of magnanimity, that it is the good sense of pride, and the noblest way of acquiring applause.

d Roberts.

"It seems that enemies have been always found the most faithful monitors; for adversity has ever been considered as the state in which a man most easily becomes acquainted with himself."—*Dr. Johnson.*

a Dr. Talmage. "Religion's lustre is, by native innocence, divinely pure, and simple from all arts: you daub and dress her like a common mistress, the harlot of your fancies; and by adding false beauties, which she wants not, make the world suspect her angel's face is foul beneath, and will not bear all lights."—*Rowe.*

14—16. (14) the Lord, *i.e.* to Jonah's God. this man's life, or for giving up this man to certain death. innocent blood,[a] *i.e.* the guilt of putting the innocent to death. done .. thee, in finding out the sinful one by sending the great storm. (15) ceased .. raging, Heb. *stood.* Comp. Lu. viii. 24.[b] (16) offered, *etc.*, according to their usual custom, but acknowledging Jehovah as a true God. Prob. it means that they *vowed* to offer sacrifice to Jehovah when they should land.

Prayer opposed to sin.—A sanctified soul never goeth to pray, but it desires sin may have some wound, and points by prayer to the place where it is most pained. How doth it bemoan itself with Ephraim, and pour forth grief for sin at the eyes! It never heareth a sermon, but it labours to set its strongest corruption in the fore-front of the battle, that when Christ shoots His arrows, and draws His sword in the preaching of the word, sin may be hit. If God send any affliction, the sanctified soul concludes that some corruption must go to the lions. If there arise any storms, presently it inquires for Jonah, and labours to cast him overboard. A sanctified soul will bear every chastisement cheerfully, even death itself, that sin may die too.[c]

17. prepared, or appointed. Comp. ch. iv. 6, 7, 8. great fish,[a] the precise kind is nowhere indicated. No explanation can remove the fact of a miraculous preservation. "It was prob. a large shark, or sea-dog, wh. is common in the Mediterranean, and has so large a throat that it can swallow a man whole." three .. nights,[b] the Heb. count the first and third parts of days as whole twenty-four hour days. Comp. Christ's time in the grave.

The great fish.—The Bible says that the Lord had "prepared a great fish" to swallow up the Prophet; but in Matthew it is called a whale by our Saviour. Now, if I am correctly informed, there are no whales in the Mediterranean. How do you explain this? Simply by the fact that the multiplication of ships in this sea, after the time of Jonah, frightened them out of it, as other causes have driven all lions out of Palestine, where they were once numerous. It is well known that some of the best fishing stations, even in the great oceans, have been abandoned by the whales, because of the multitude of whalers that visited them. This sea would, of course, be forsaken. If you could stock it thoroughly with these monsters to-day, there would be none left a year hence. But up to the time of Jonah, navigation was in its infancy; ships were few and small; and they kept mostly along the shores, leaving the interior undisturbed. Whales may, therefore, have been common in the Mediterranean. And there are instances on record of the appearance of huge marine creatures in this sea in ancient days. Some of these may have been whales. The Hebrew word *dâg*, it is true, means simply any great fish; but nothing is gained by resorting to such a solution of the difficulty. Our Lord calls it a whale, and I am contented with His translation; and whale it was—not a shark or lamia—as some critics maintain. In a word, the whole affair was miraculous; and, as such, is taken out of the category of difficulties. If a whale had never before been in the Mediterranean, God could bring one to the exact spot needed as easily as He brought the ram to the place where Abraham was coming to sacrifice Isaac. He could also furnish the necessary capacity to

a De. xxi. 8.

b "God spares the prayerful penitent, a truth illustrated now in the case of the sailors, presently in that of Jonah, and thirdly in that of Nineveh." —*Fausset.*

"They never fail who die in a great cause." — *Byron.*

c *Wm. Jenkin,* 1656.

a "The word *ketos*, in Mat. xii. 40, is not restricted in its meaning to a whale or a cetacean; it may denote any sea monster, either a whale or a shark, a seal, or a tunny of enormous size." — *Biblical Things.*

b Mat. xii. 39, 40, xvi. 4; Lu. xi. 30.

"The way to go through difficulties is the same as when we walk home through a fog. When we enter, all seems dark and mist before us; and, as we advance, we are completely enveloped by the hazy, cheerless cloud. But if there be a little space around us, which is clear enough to show the path a few yards before, it is enough. On we go, straight through, and we have our reward in the end. So it is with the Christian."—*Bowes.*

accomplish the end intended. It is idle, and worse—cowardly—to withhold our faith in a Bible miracle until we can find or invent some way in which the thing might have happened, without any great miracle after all.[c]

[c] *Dr. Thompson.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—3. (1) **prayed**, not so much in the sense of "offered supplications," as in that of "uttered devout thoughts;" "expressed his trust and thankfulness." **out . . belly**, some rend. "when delivered out of the fish's belly."[a] (2) **cried . . affliction**, *comp.* Ps. xviii. 2. **belly of hell**, or the grave,[b] to wh. he likens his strange resting-place inside the fish. (3) **thou**, not the sailors. Jonah does not stop with the mere *agents;* but fully recognises the hand of God. **billows**, *etc.*, comp. Ps. xlii. 7.

Importunate prayer.—"It is almost incredible with what importunity a native of the East will urge his application for whatever he wants, and the result almost always proves successful, as the person applied to is glad to grant the petition to get rid of his importunities. As a specimen, we subjoin one short anecdote related by Mr. Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, of a dervish, who, on that gentleman's first arrival in that country, came to him asking the sum of ten piastres. On being refused, the mendicant stationed himself at the door, and continued crying '*Hag, hag, hag,*' without interruption, for days and nights together, till at last Mr. Bruce, to free himself from so intolerable a nuisance, gave him the money he demanded. It was by a similar method that the traveller's friend prevailed on his neighbour to rise and give him the bread he wanted; and it was of this well-known feature of Oriental manners that our Lord availed himself in this parable, which was intended to describe the duty of continuing in persevering and importunate prayer to God."[c]

[a] "The *sentiments* of his ode are those wh. he had then felt: the *form*, into which they here appear cast, and which presents a highly finished specimen of Hebrew poetry, we must suppose to have been the production of a later and more tranquil hour."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] Is. xiv. 9.

[c] *Dr. Jamieson.*

4—7. (4) **cast . . sight**, *comp.* Ps. xxxi. 22. **yet**, or, if nothing else is left me. **temple**, *i.e.* heaven.[a] (5) **waters**, *etc.*, Ps. lxix. 1. **weeds**, *etc.*, prob. a fig. for his seemingly hopelessly entangled condition. (6) **bottoms**, Heb. *cuttings off:* extremities, terminations. **for ever**, so far as his own power of deliverance was concerned. **corruption**, or the pit, or the grave.[b] (7) **came in**, or reached to Thy heaven.

The resolve of faith (*v.* 4).—Jonah a type of Christ, disciplined but not destroyed. Learn—I. That the darkest day has its particular duty. II. That no true believer ever looked to God's holy temple in vain.[c]

Prayer heard in heaven.—A man of God, when speaking to a poor sufferer in the Blackrock Convalescent Home, at Brighton, who was bowed down by despairing remorse, inquired, "Have you asked to-day for the pardon of your sins?" "That I have." "And do you think God has written down your prayers in His book?" "I did not know that He kept one for my prayers." "He tells us He has a book of remembrance for our thoughts, when we think upon His name; and elsewhere, that our words are kept account of; and, between the two, do you not think that your prayers are included? And do you think the loving God has written in that book to-day, 'On the 25th of February, 1868, William T—— asked Me for the forgiveness of all his sins,

[a] "Upon recollecting myself, I thought it my duty not to despair of Thy mercy, but direct my prayer towards Thy heavenly habitation."—*Lowth.*

[b] Ps. xvi. 10; Isa. xxxviii. 17.

[c] *R. Cecil, M.A.* "Irregularity and want of method are only supportable in men of great learning or genius, who are often too full to be exact, and therefore choose to throw down their pearls in heaps before the reader, rather than be at the pains of stringing them."—*Addison.*

for My dear Son's sake, and I refused him?'" "No, sir; I cannot believe that." "What then has He written beside your prayer? It is not with Him, as with you or me, to say, 'I think I may.' There is no uncertainty in His mind." The man thought deeply for a time, and at length replied, "Then it is more likely He has written, 'Granted,' by its side." From that moment the fetters of his fears were broken; and the man was set free to trample on his sins, and to serve his Saviour.[d]

d Shining Light.

8—10. (8) **lying vanities,**[a] may be applied to idols, or to the purposes of self-will. "Poss. the Prophet glances also at his own folly, in having chosen his own way instead of obeying Jehovah's command." (9) **sacrifice,** *etc.*, Ps. l. 14, 23, cxvi. 17; Ho. xiv. 2. **salvation . . Lord,** Ps. iii. 8. (10) **spake . . fish,** or intimated His will to the fish: all creatures being under His control.[b]

Ps. xxxi. 6. "All who hug a lie, lose God, who is Truth and Love." — *Wordsworth.*

b Ps. viii. 6—9.

Salvation of the Lord (*v.* 9).—I. Let us expound the doctrine. 1. The plan of salvation is entirely of God; 2. So it was of the Lord in execution; 3. In the application; 4. As to the sustaining of the Word in any man's heart. II. How God has hedged this doctrine about. III. What is and what should be the influence of this doctrine upon men? 1. It is a great battering-ram against their pride; 2. It is the key-stone of all divinity. IV. The obverse of this truth is that damnation is of men.[c]

c C. Spurgeon. "Difficulty is a severe instructor, set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental guardian and legislator, who knows us better than we know ourselves; and He loves us better too. He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves, and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper. This amicable conflict with difficulty obliges us to an intimate acquaintance with our object, and compels us to consider it in all its relations. It will not suffer us to be superficial." —*Burke.*

The three days' burial.—Postscript of a letter from John Howard, the philanthropist, to his friend Dr. Stennett. Dated Smyrna, August 11th, 1786: "My best compliments wait upon Mrs. Stennett. I was at Constantinople a month. A person informed me that, a fortnight before my arrival, the grand vizier had examined the biscuits of the garrison, and finding them deficient in weight and quality, ordered the contractor to come before him. His excuse not being satisfactory, on his return he sent immediately and cut off his head in the street, there to remain under the arm of the corpse three days, having some of the biscuits placed before him, and a label upon his breast. It being very hot weather, I said it was impossible to remain three days in the street. 'Yea, it did,' said he, 'for our three days may be only five or six and twenty hours. If one half-hour before sunset, we call it a day; and so if half an hour after sunrise, we call it another day.' My mind reverted to the glorious event that is our joy and rejoicing. Adieu, adieu, my dear friends.—Yours, J. H."[d]

d History of Little Wild Street Church.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—4. (1) **second time,** graciously renewing the Divine commission. Jonah would not venture to go to Nineveh without such a new charge. (2) **preach,** proclaim, as a herald: *v.* 4. (3) **exceeding great city,** *lit.* "a great city to God:" an expression conveying to the Heb. mind peculiar greatness and grandeur. **three days' journey,** in circumference, *i.e.* some forty to fifty miles round.[a] (4) **day's journey,** this indicates rather the length of time wh. he spent in preaching, than the distance he traversed. **forty days,** the usual Scripture time of probation. **overthrown,** Ge. xix. 21, 25.

a Nineveh appears to have been made up of four cities joined together.

Zeal in preaching.—Dr. Payson being taken suddenly ill, and,

b "He must have been the subject of strange and conflicting emotions when he entered the gates of that proud capital. . . There was enough to

as every one thought, about to die, he remarks: "What gave me most concern was, that notice had been given of my being about to preach! Whilst the doctor was preparing my medicine, feeling my pains abated, I on a sudden cried out, 'Doctor, my pains are suspended; by the help of God, I will go and preach, and then come home and die.' In my own apprehension, and in appearance to others, I was a dying man; the people heard me as such. The invisible realities of another world lay open to my view. Expecting to stretch into eternity, and to be with my Master before the morning, I spoke with peculiar energy. Such effects followed the word, that I thought it was worth dying for a thousand times." His biographer says, "He had something so peculiar in his manner, expressive of sincerity in all he delivered, that it constrained the most abandoned to regard what he said as not only true but of the last importance to souls."[c]

5—8. (5) **believed God**, Ge. xv. 6. They heeded the warning wh. God's Prophet gave.[a] **fast**, usual national mode of expressing penitential feeling. **sackcloth**, the sign of humiliation. (6) **for word**, or "and the word reached the king." The king did not begin the fast, but yielded to, and directed the national feeling. The name of the king cannot be assured.[b] **sackcloth and ashes**, *see* Est. iv. 1, 3; Is. lviii. 5, etc.[c] (7) **nobles**, lit. *great men*. **beast**, heathen nations thus made their cattle share in their mournings. (8) **turn**, *etc.*, obs. that they recognise the necessity for signs of sincerity, "fruits meet for repentance."

Repentance of the Ninevites (*vv.* 8—10).—I. The means they used. I. They fasted; 2. They prayed; 3. They reformed their lives. II. The hopes they cherished. III. The success they obtained. Apply:—1. For reproof; 2. For encouragement.[d]

Nineveh.—Ashur, probably imitating the policy of his dangerous competitor, built four cities for the accommodation and defence of his descendants; the first of which was Nineveh, the capital of his kingdom. This powerful city stood on the east side of the Tigris, not far from the river Lycus, one of its tributary streams; but on which side of the Lycus it lay, cannot now be discovered. The prediction of Nahum, that Nineveh should be so completely destroyed that future ages should search in vain for the spot which it once covered, has been fulfilled in all its extent: "With an overflowing flood, He will make an utter end of the place thereof." Ancient geographers inform us of another city of this name, which stood on the Euphrates, and was probably built by Nimrod in honour of his son. But Nineveh, so frequently mentioned in Scripture, lay near the Tigris; and to this last the following observations refer. Strabo affirms that Nineveh was larger than Babylon itself; an assertion confirmed by Diodorus, who makes that city sixty miles in compass, while Strabo makes Babylon only about forty-eight. It is therefore with justice that the inspired writer calls Nineveh "an exceeding great city of three days' journey." This account some interpreters refer not to the length, but to the compass of the city; allowing twenty miles for a day's journey, which accords with the common estimation of those times. But the phrase, "Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey," seems rather to intimate that the measure of three days' journey is to be understood of the length, not of the compass of Nineveh. Hence it

shake his faith, and to cowardise his bold, haughty, and scornful spirit; yet he dared not a second time abandon his mission."—*J. Blackburn.*

v. 1. *B. Hinton*, 208.

v. 4. *J. Saurin*, viii. 1.

c R. T. S.

a "The expression betokens admiration for the simplicity of their faith, not without oblique reference to Israel's unbelief."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The king seems to have resided in the royal palace at Khorsabad, in the N.E. corner of the Tetrapolis of Nineveh." — *Wordsworth.*

c "Mourners take off their outer clothing, and cover themselves from head to foot with a piece of brown, coarse sackcloth, such as is worn by slaves while offered for sale; and occasionally they throw dust or ashes upon their heads when thus covered, as a token of grief and humiliation."—*Van Lennep.*

v. 5. *J. Glanvil*, 337; *Abp. Sharp*, vi. 82; *T. Newlin*, 287.

vv. 8, 9. *Dr. R. South*, ix. 340.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

"Mischief that may be helped, is hard to know, and danger going on still multiplies: when harm hath many wings, care comes too late."—*Lord Brooke.*

may be easily supposed that, agreeably to the statement of the Prophet, it contained "more than sixscore thousand persons that could not discern between their right hand and their left hand;" for, supposing this to be understood of infants under two years old, these generally, as Bochart observes, make at least the fifth part of the city. If this proportion be just, the inhabitants of Nineveh would not be more than six hundred thousand; which is not more than Seleucia contained in the days of Pliny, and not so many as has been numbered in the capital of the British empire.[e]

e Paxton.

9, 10. (9) **who . . repent**, Joel ii. 14. The only ground they had for their hope in God's mercy, lay in the fact that He had so graciously sent them warning. (10) **works**, proving the sincerity of their *words*. **repented**, Ex. xxxii. 14. **did it not**, "The appointed hour came and passed, leaving Nineveh undestroyed."[a]

a "God's sparing Nineveh when in the jaws of destruction, on the first dawn of repentance, encourages the timid penitent, and shows beforehand that Israel's doom, soon after accomplished, is to be ascribed, not to unwillingness to forgive on God's part, but to their own obstinate impenitence."—*Fausset.* Je. xviii. 7, 8.

Who can tell?—I have heard of a certain person who was tempted to conclude his day over and himself lost; that, therefore, it was his best course to put an end to his life, which if continued would but increase his sin, and consequently his misery, from which there was no escape; and seeing he must be in hell, the sooner he was there the sooner he should know the worst, which was preferable to his being worn away with the tormenting expectation of what was to come. Under the influence of such suggestion as these, he went to a river with a design to throw himself in; but as he was about to do it he seemed to hear a voice saying to him, "Who can tell?" as if the words had been audibly delivered. By this, therefore, he was brought to a stand; his thoughts were arrested, and thus began to work on the passage mentioned: "Who can tell what God can do when He will proclaim His grace glorious? Who can tell but such a one as I may find mercy, or what will be the issue of humble prayer to heaven for it? Who can tell what purposes God will serve in my recovery?" By such thoughts as these, being so far influenced as to resolve to try, it pleased God graciously to enable him through all his doubts and fears to throw himself by faith on Jesus Christ, as able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him, humbly desiring and expecting mercy for His own sake, to his own soul. In this he was not disappointed, but afterwards became an eminent Christian and minister, and from his own experience of the riches of grace was greatly useful to the conversion and comfort of others.[b]

v. 9. *S. Davies*, iii. 62; *J. Newton*, v. 249.

v. 10. *J. Randall*, 42; *H. M'Neile*, 250; *Dr. Paley*, ii. 153; *W. H. Marriott*, 114; *Hon. A. P. Percival*, 33.

b Rev. D. Wilson.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—3. (1) **displeased Jonah**, *lit.* "It was evil with Jonah with very great evilness." **angry**, bec. God's mercy made him appear to be a false Prophet. He was more concerned for his own honour than for God's.[a] (2) **prayed . . Lord**, it was a good sign that he did not keep away from God, but took his vexed feeling *to Him*. **gracious**, *etc.*, Ex. xxxiv. 6; Joel ii. 13. **evil**, *i.e.* threatened evil.[b] (3) **take . . life**,[c] as if he thought it no longer of value, bec. he was made to appear a deceiver. It is the language of morbid feeling.

a "Jonah had a character, no doubt, solidly good, and open to conviction, but habitually irascible and morose, and apt, under exciting circumstances, to view things in their worst and most

Jonah's gourd (*v.* 1).—I. Creature comforts are shortlived.

II. The comforts we most delight in are generally the first to perish. III. Our comforts often perish from unforeseen and inconsiderable causes. IV. They perish often when most needed.[d]

Anger: when sinful.—1. When we are angry with the providence of God.

2. When we are angry with the laws of God.

3. When we are angry at the doctrines of the Gospel.

4. When we are angry at the good we see in others.

5. When we are angry with those who differ from us in religious sentiments.

6. When we are angry at reproof.

7. When we wish evil upon our reprover.

8. When we use unlawful means to avenge ourselves, we sin in anger.[e]

Against anger.—1. Consider that anger is a professed enemy to counsel; it is a direct storm, in which no man can be heard to speak or call from without: for if you counsel gently, you are despised; if you urge it and be vehement, you provoke it more. Be careful, therefore, to lay up beforehand a great stock of reason and prudent consideration, that, like a besieged town, you may be provided for, and be defensible from within, since you are not likely to be relieved from without. Anger is not to be suppressed but by something which is as inward as itself, and more habitual. To which purpose add that—2. Of all passions it endeavours most to make reason useless. 3. That it is a universal passion of an infinite object; for no man was ever so amorous as to love a toad; none so envious as to repine at the condition of the miserable; no man so timorous as to fear a dead bee; but anger is troubled at everything, and every man, and every accident; and, therefore, unless it be suppressed, it will make a man's condition restless. 4. If it proceeds from a great cause, it turns to fury; if from a small cause, it is peevishness; and so is always either terrible or ridiculous. 5. It makes a man's body monstrous, deformed, and contemptible; the voice horrid; the eyes cruel; the face pale or fiery; the gait fierce; the speech clamorous and loud. 6. It is neither manly nor ingenuous. 7. It proceeds from softness of spirit and pusillanimity; which makes, that women are more angry than men, sick persons more than the healthful, old men more than young, unprosperous and calamitous people than the blessed and fortunate. 8. It is a passion fitter for flies and insects than for persons professing nobleness and bounty. 9. It is troublesome, not only to those that suffer it, but to them that behold it; there being no greater incivility of entertainment than, for the cook's fault or the negligence of the servants, to be cruel or outrageous, or unpleasant in the presence of guests. 10. It makes marriage to be a necessary and unavoidable trouble to friendships, and societies, and familiarities to be intolerable. 11. It multiplies the evils of drunkenness, and makes the levities of wine to run into madness. 12. It makes innocent jesting to be the beginning of tragedies. 13. It turns friendship into hatred; it makes a man lose himself, and his reason, and his argument, in disputations. It turns the desires of knowledge into an itch of wrangling. It adds insolency to power. It turns justice into cruelty, and judgment into oppression. It changes discipline into tediousness and hatred of liberal institutions. It makes a prosperous man to be envied and

gloomy aspects."—*Kitto.*

b "I anticipated by fleeing the disappointment of my design, through Thy long suffering mercy."—*Fausset.*

c 1 Ki. xix. 4.

vv. 1, 2. *Dr. B. Whichcote*, i. 1; *J. Sortain*, 59.

d C. Bradley.

e Dr. Beaumont.

"It is difficulties which give birth to miracles. It is not every calamity that is a curse: and early adversity is often a blessing. Perhaps Madame de Maintenon would never have mounted a throne had not her cradle been rocked in a prison. Surmounted obstacles not only teach but hearten us in our future struggles; for virtue must be learnt, though, unfortunately, some of the vices come as it were by inspiration. The austerities of our northern climate are thought to be the cause of our abundant comforts, as our wintry nights and our stormy seas have given us a race of seamen perhaps unequalled, and certainly not surpassed, by any in the world."—*Sharpe.*

"Our dispositions will be suitable to that which we most frequently think on; for the soul is, as it were, tinged with the colour and com-

plexion of its own thoughts" —*Marcus Antoninus.*

the unfortunate to be unpitied. It is a confluence of all the irregular passions; there is in it envy and sorrow, fear and scorn, pride and prejudice, rashness and inconsideration, rejoicing in evil and a desire to inflict it, self-love, impatience and curiosity. And lastly, though it be very troublesome to others, yet it is most troublesome to him that hath it.

4—6. (4) doest . . angry? or "Art thou greatly angry?" In either form God calls him to self-consideration, wakening conscience into exercise. (5) booth, temporary hut of branches and leaves. become . . city, either the forty days were not expired, or he had some hope that God would yet show some signs of His power, if not actually destroying the city. (6) gourd, Heb. *kikajon*, the Palma Christi, or *recinus*, a biennial plant cultivated in E. gardens.[a]

Jonah's gourd (*vv.* 5—9).—I. His inordinate joy at the acquisition of the gourd. 1. He was at the time in a most deplorable state of mind; 2. Then it was that God caused the gourd to spring up suddenly to cover the booth. II. His intemperate sorrow at the loss of it. 1. God seeing his ingratitude withdrew the gift soon after it had been bestowed; 2. But the impatient spirit of Jonah only raged and complained the more. Reflections:—(1) What selfishness in the heart of man; (2) What mercy is there in the heart of God.[b]

Jonah's gourd.—Is there any gourd in Palestine of growth so rapid as to lay a foundation for the statement that Jonah's grew up in a night? Certainly not. But without any of that anxiety about the how and the possible in miracles, we may remark that there is an economical propriety in selecting this vine rather than any other, and for several reasons. It is very commonly used for trailing over temporary arbours. It grows with extraordinary rapidity. In a few days after it has fairly begun to run, the whole arbour is covered. It forms a shade absolutely impenetrable to the sun's rays, even at noonday. It flourishes best in the very hottest part of summer; and, lastly, when injured or cut, it withers away with equal rapidity. In selecting the gourd, therefore, there is not only an adherence to verisimilitude, which is always becoming, but there is also an economy, if we may so speak, in the expenditure of miraculous agency. The question is not about power at all. The same God who caused the gourd to grow in a night could make a cedar do so likewise; but this would be a wide departure from the general method of miraculous interposition, which is to employ it no farther than is necessary to secure the result required. Is there any reason to suppose that, after all, it was not a gourd, but some other plant—that of the castor-bean, for example, as many learned critics have concluded? Orientals never dream of training a castor-oil plant over a booth, or planting it for a shade, and they would have but small respect for any one who did. It is in no way adapted for that purpose, while thousands of arbours are covered with various creepers of the general gourd family. As to ancient translations, the Septuagint gives colocynth, a general name for gourd; and the Vulgate, castor-bean.[c]

7—9. (7) worm,[a] not an individual worm perhaps, but a class of worm wh. attacked such swift-growing plants. (8) vehement . . wind, E. hot winds are more suffocating and oppressive than

a "No gourd actually grows up in a single night, and the expression, 'wh. was the son of a night,' must be regarded as giving in strong poetic figure the fact of swift growth. The gourd is a climbing vine of rapid growth, always trained to run up trees, trellis, and temporary booths, the size of its leaves affording a pleasant shade." —*Bib. Things.*

"The *ricinus* grows from 8 to 10ft. high. Only one leaf grows on a branch, but that leaf being often more than a foot large, the collective leaves give good shelter from the heat." —*Fausset.*

v. 4. *T. Davies*, 148.

vv. 5—7. *E. Blencowe*, iii. 118.

v. 6. *J. C. Dieteric, Ant.* 734.

b *C. Simeon, M.A.*

c *Dr. Thompson.*

a "The gourd-vine is very liable to be destroyed by grubs

even the sun's rays. **wished . . die**, in his fretful impatience, he morbidly fancied that all things were against him. (9) **I do well**, better, "Yes, I am greatly angry." Jonah was altogether unreasonable. He was angry bec. the gourd was destroyed, and angry bec Nineveh was spared. None of God's dealings seemed to please him.

The gourd.—The gourd produces leaves and branches resembling those of the garden cucumber. Its fruit is shaped like an orange, of a light white substance when the rind is taken off, and so bitter that it has been called the gall of the earth. It is not eatable; but is a very fit vessel for flagons. being light, capacious, and smooth, frequently a foot and a half in diameter. The gourd of Jonah is generally allowed to be the *elkeroa* or *ricinus*, a plant well known in the East; "it grows very high, and projects many branches and large leaves. In a short time it reaches a considerable height: its stem is thick, channelled, distinguished by many knots, hollow within, branchy at top, of a sea-green colour: its leaves are large, cut into seven or more divisions, pointed and edged, of a bright, blackish, shining green. Those nearest the top are the largest; its flowers are ranged on their stems like a thyrsus: they are of a deep red, and stand three together. With this description agrees the account in the Prophet, of its rising over his head to shelter it; for this plant rises eight or nine feet, and is remarkably rapid in withering, when decayed or gathered. The gourd which defended the Prophet is said to have been prepared by the Lord. We have no reason to conclude from this expression that the Almighty created it for the special purpose; He only appointed and promoted its growth in that particular spot, raising its stem and expanding its branches and leaves according to the ordinary laws of nature, till it formed a most refreshing shade over the place where the angry seer waited the fulfilment of his prediction. "We may conceive of it," says Calmet, "as an extraordinary one of its kind, remarkably rapid in growth, remarkably hard in its stem, remarkably vigorous in its branches, and remarkable for the extensive spread of its leaves, and the deep gloom of their shadow; and after a certain duration, remarkable for a sudden withering and uselessness to the impatient Prophet. The worm which struck the gourd has been considered rather as a maggot than a worm. It was, no doubt, of the species appropriate to the plant; but of what particular species is uncertain. Like the gourd, it was also prepared by Jehovah, to indicate its extraordinary size and vigour; that it acted by His commission; and that the effect of its operations was so rapid and decisive, as clearly to discover the presence of Divine energy.[b]

10, 11. (10) **pity . . gourd**, wh. was not Jonah's own, and was naturally so shortlived and comparatively worthless. The gourd and Nineveh are to be contrasted: the one in its relation to Jonah, the other in its relation to God. (11) **should not I**,[a] a gracious appeal to Jonah's better thoughts of what is fitting for God to do. **discern . . hand**,[b] a poetical figure for children: these, with the cattle, must have shared in any general destruction of the city.

Does God care for oxen? (*v.* 11).—I. God's care for cattle. 1. He made and preserves the lower creatures; 2. He made them to be happy; 3. Sin has made them a sharer in man's sufferings;

or worms, which attack the root, in which case it withers and dries up immediately, owing to its light and pulpy texture."—*Van Lennep.*

v. 7. *C. Bradley*, 125; *A. Roberts*, vi. 282.

v. 9. *Dr. W. Craig*, i. 167; *H. Boys*, 114; *H. Turner*, 228; *T. Perry*, 79.

A gourd wound itself round a lofty palm, and in a few weeks climbed to its very top. "How old mayst thou be?" asked the new comer. "About a hundred years," was the answer. "A hundred years, and no taller! Only look, I have grown as tall as you in fewer days than you can count years." "I know that well," replied the palm, "Every summer of my life a gourd has climbed up round me, as proud as thou art, and as shortlived as thou wilt be." *b Paxton.*

a Ge. xviii. 23–33.

b De. i. 39; Is. vii. 15, 16.

vv. 10, 11. *D. W. Marks*, 306; *Dr. J. Grant*, 263; *C. E. Kennaway*, i.

c Dr. Edmond.

"Let every one that is struck with horror at the mention of a man void of pity"

4. God is sorry to see them suffering. II. The lessons for us. 1. If God cares for them, so should we; 2. If God cares for oxen, how much more for us!

The gourd.—The margin has, instead of "gourd," "*Kikajon*, or Palme-crist!" Dr. Clarke asks, "But what was the *Kikajon?* the best judges say the *racinus* or *Palma-Christi*, from which we get what is vulgarly called castor-oil." The Tamul translation has, instead of "gourd," *Amanaku, i.e.* the *Palma-Christi!* It is believed, also, the verb is in the preterperfect tense, had prepared, which may be another instance of the verb as illustrated under Isa. xxi. 9. The *Palma-Christi* is most abundant in the East, and I have had it in my own garden to the height of fourteen feet. The growth is very rapid: *v.* 7, "God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered," *i.e.* the *Palma-Christi* till it withered. This tree, in the course of a very short period, produces the "rough caterpillar," respecting which I have written under Jer. li. 27, and in one night (where the caterpillars are abundant) they will strip the tree of its leaves, and thus take away the shade. But there is another worm in the East, called the *kuruttu-pullu*, *i.e.* the blind worm, said to be produced by the dew; it begins its devastations at what is called the cabbage part of the palm, and soon destroys the tree: *v.* 8, "God prepared a vehement east wind." I have already written on that parching, life-destroying wind. But the margin has it, or "silent," which probably means calm. Thus when there is a lull of an easterly wind, and the sun pours his fierce rays on the head of the poor traveller, it seems as if life must depart: birds and beasts pant; there is the silence of death, and nature seems ready to expire.[d]

that feels resentment at the name of oppression, and melts with sorrow at the voice of misery, remember that those who have now lost all these sentiments were originally formed with passions and instincts, and reason like his own. Let him reflect that he who now stands most firmly may fall by negligence, and that negligence arises from security. Let him, therefore, observe by what gradations men sink into perdition, by what insensible deviations they wander from the ways of virtue, till they are at length scarce able to return."—*Dr. Johnson.*

[d] *Roberts.*

MICAH.

Introduction.

I. Author. MICAH, = "*Who like Jehovah?*" Of his personal history scarcely anything is known (comp. i. 1 with i. 14). **II. Time.** B.C. 750—700. Micah was contemporary with Isaiah; and his book comprises a summary of the prophecies delivered by the last-named seer, concerning Messiah and the final blessedness of God's covenant people. Occasionally the one repeats the other (comp. Isa. ii. 2—4 with Mic. iv. 1—3). **III. Style.** The style in some degree resembles that of Isaiah. It is forcible, pointed, and concise, frequently animated and sublime. The tropes are varied according to the nature of the subject, and are very beautiful. **IV. Special Features.** Two predictions may be particularly noticed. The first relates to Samaria (i. 6), a city beautiful for situation; the crowned hill of Ephraim, adorned with sumptuous palaces; yet the stones thereof should be poured down into the valley: and modern travellers describe the exact accomplishment. There are the fragments of massy columns, the foundations thereof discovered, and the stones rolled down into the valley,—a living witness to the truth of the prophetic word. Another utterance is yet more remarkable: earlier prophecy had noted the seed of the woman, the descendant of Abraham in the line of Judah from the family of David; and here (v. 2) His birth-place is designated by name; so that, when Herod inquired where Messiah should be born, the unhesitating reply was Bethlehem, and this prediction was referred to (**Matt. ii. 4, 5**).

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

This Book may be divided into three parts.

PART I. Comprises the prophecies delivered in the reigns of Jotham, king of Judah (with whom Pekah, king of Israel, was contemporary), in which the Divine judgments are denounced against both Israel and Judah for their sins.....i. 2—16

PART II. Contains predictions delivered in the reigns of Ahaz, king of Judah (with whom his son Hezekiah was associated in the government, during the latter part of his life), and of Pekah, king of Israel, who was also contemporary with him..ii.—iv. 8

PART III. Includes the prophecies delivered by Micah during the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, the first years of whose government were contemporary with the greater part of the reign of Hoshea, the last king of Israel .....iv. 9—13, v.—vii.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1, 2. (1) **Micah**, same as *Micaiah*. The word means, "Who is as Jah?" **Morasthite**, from the town of Moresheth-gath. **Samaria and Jerusalem**, mentioned as capitals, and standing for the respective kingdoms of Israel and Judah. (2) **all . . is**, *i.e. whatever fills it*:[a] or the fulness thereof.

Hearing the Word.—An innkeeper, addicted to intemperance, on hearing of the particularly pleasing mode of singing at a church some miles distant, went to gratify his curiosity, but with a resolution not to hear a word of the sermon. Having with difficulty found admission into a narrow open pew, as soon as the hymn before sermon was sung, which he heard with great attention, he secured both his ears against the sermon with his forefingers. He had not been in this position many minutes, before the prayer finished, and the sermon commenced with an awful appeal to the consciences of the hearers, of the necessity of attending to the things which belonged to their everlasting peace; and the minister, addressing them solemnly, said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Just the moment before these words were pronounced, a fly had fastened on the face of the innkeeper, and, stinging him sharply, he drew one of his fingers from his ears, and struck off the painful visitant. At that very moment the words, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," pronounced with great solemnity, entered the ear that was opened, as a clap of thunder. It struck him with irresistible force: he kept his hand from returning to his ear, and, feeling an impression he had never known before, he presently withdrew the other finger, and hearkened with deep attention to the discourse which followed. A salutary change was produced on him. He abandoned his former wicked practices, became truly serious, and for many years went, during all weathers, six miles to the church where he first received the knowledge of divine things. After about eighteen years' faithful and close walk with God, he died rejoicing in the hope of that glory which he now enjoys.[b]

3—5. (3) **cometh forth**, *comp.* Is. xxvi. 21. **his place**, Ps. cxv. 3. **tread . . places**, *comp.* De. xxxii. 13, xxxiii. 29. (4) **mountains**, *etc.*, Ps. xcvii. 5. (5) **what . . Jerusalem?** "The sin of each kingdom is here identified with the capital city as the place in which it assumed its most aggravated and concentrated form. Jerusalem is regarded as a great idol temple."[a]

Hearing the Word.—As there were wise virgins and foolish virgins, so there are wise hearers and foolish hearers. Some are so nice, that they had rather pine than take their food of any which is licensed by a bishop; as if Elias should refuse his food because a raven brought it to him, and not an angel. Some come unto the service to save forfeiture, and then they stay the sermon for shame; some come because they would not be counted atheists; some come because they would avoid the name of papists: some come to please their friends. One hath a good man to his friend; and, lest he should offend him, he frequents

a "The Prophets sometimes address their speech to inanimate things, to upbraid the stupidity of men."—*Lowth.*

v. 2. *Dr. G. Croft*, ii. 165; *J. Randall*, 106.

"A remarkable change has taken place among the people of this country in regard to the public service of religion. Our forefathers put their clocks on the outside of their places of worship, that they might not be too late in their attendance: we have transferred them to the inside of the house of God, lest we should stay too long in the service,—a sad and an ominous change."—*R. Watson.*

b *Whitecross.*

a *Spk. Com.*

"'I have an ear for other preachers,' Sir John Cheke used to say, 'but I have a heart for Latimer.' Here is a very clear and main distinction. Too often men hear the Word sounding its drums and trumpets outside their walls, and they are filled with admiration of the martial music, but their city gates are fast closed and vigi-

lantly guarded, so that the truth has no admittance, but only the sound of it. Would to God we knew how to reach men's affections, for the heart is the target we aim at, and unless we hit it we miss altogether." —*Spurgeon.*

b Henry Smith.

the preacher's, that his friend may think well of him. Some come with their masters and mistresses for attendance. Some come with a fame: they have heard great speech of the man, and therefore they will spend one hour to hear him once, but to see whether it be so as they say. Some come because they are idle: to pass the time, they go to a sermon, lest they should be weary of doing nothing. Some come with their fellows: one saith, "Let us go to the sermon." "Content," saith he; and he goeth for company. Some hear the sound of a voice as they pass by the church, and step in before they be aware. Another hath some occasion of business, and he appoints a friend to meet him at such a sermon, as they do at Paul's. All these are accidental hearers, like children which sit in the market, and neither buy nor sell: but as many foxes have been taken when they came to take; so they which come to spy or wonder or gaze or scoff have changed their minds before they went home, like one which finds when he doth not seek.[b]

6—9. (6) **heap . . field,** *i.e.* the ruins would be gathered into heaps in the same manner as in cleaning a vineyard, or as our farmers gather up the stones when they clean a field.[a] **valley,** below Samaria, wh. stood on a hill. **discover,** *i.e.* lay bare the very foundations. (7) **hires,** riches of the idol-shrines. **gathered,** *etc.*, the strongest Scripture figure for covetous wickedness. (8) **wail,** *etc.*, *i.e.* in anticipation of the desolation I will at once assume the garb, etc., of the mourner. **dragons,** *etc.*, Le. xi. 16; Job xxx. 29. (9) **incurable,** nothing can now heal it, or stay the threatened corruption.

Samaria.—On the morning of the third day after our departure from Jerusalem we left Shechem—the Shechem of the Old Testament, but bearing in the New Testament the name of Sychar. We started early in the morning on our way to another city of still greater celebrity, the ancient city of Samaria. Our tents had been pitched on a beautiful plain at the foot of Mount Gerizim. Before the light of the morning sun had reached them they were once more struck, our Syrian horses were saddled, and we went down at once into a deep valley. Through this valley, which greatly attracted our attention in consequence of its various enchantments, there flows a bright and musical stream. It scatters richness in its path. The trees and shrubs which spring up around it are such as are common in these regions—pomegranates, almonds, olives, mulberries, the fig tree, the vine, the orange, the oleander. The valley, in its great fertility, seemed to be loaded everywhere with the yellow richness of its fruits, and the varied hues of its flowers. The stars gradually retired from the sky. The golden sunbeams crept silently among the dewy branches. I listened to the voice of the rocky stream. The song of the morning birds answered to the song of the waters. Nature rejoiced and put on her ornaments at the sound of these sweet voices.[b]

10—12. (10) **Gath,** *see* 2 Sa. i. 20.[a] **Aphrah,** poss. *Ophrah*, Jos. xviii. 23. **roll . . dust,** the sign of deepest sorrow. (11) **Saphir,** a village among the hills of Judah. **Zaanan,** poss. the Zenan of Jos. xv. 37: site unknown. **Beth-ezel,** unknown. Poss. the Azel near Jerus., Zec. xiv. 5. (12) **Maroth,** also unknown. **waited,** better, *sickened.*

a "The stones wh. yet lie on its surface, bereft of the glory that might seem to hover round a ruin, however defaced, have been gathered singly, and cast into heaps, as it were, the heaps of a field, and not the remains of a capital."—*Keith.* "Here again we have unalloyed and rampant heathenism: the 'sacred' courtesans of the temple give a part of their hire towards the repairing and beautifying of the building; and also to purchase idols, or carry on the festivals. At the annual festival of Scandan, which continues twenty-four days, the females alluded to defray the expenses of the last day from the proceeds of their own wickedness."—*Roberts.*

b Prof. Upham.

a "The Prophet here refers in sad irony to the shame which the Israelite should feel in exposing his woes

Samaria (*continued*).—Proceeding thus some eight or nine miles in a northern direction through a country contrasting strongly in the whole distance with the barren mountains and plains which are to be found in many other parts of Palestine, we came to the city of Samaria. This city, situated on the side of a lofty but gently sloping hill, with broad and deep valleys around it, was once the residence of the kings of Israel, after the revolt of the ten tribes against the kings of the house of David. Of the great wealth and splendour of Samaria, at different periods of its history, I suppose there can be no reasonable doubt. It is said in the Book of Kings that Ahab built a palace of ivory in Samaria; and prophetic denunciations, called forth by the luxury and oppressions of the Samaritans, are found in the Book of the Prophet Amos. "I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish; and the great houses shall have an end, saith the Lord." These expressions indicate with some distinctness the magnificence of the city of Samaria at an early period. It had its vicissitudes; but its wealth and splendour remained for many years. After the conquest of Palestine by the Romans, and during their authority here, Samaria was selected as a place of viceregal residence, and was enriched and beautified by works of art. Herod the Great once resided here; and expending upon it all the vast resources of his genius and tyrannical power, he gave it the proud name of Sebaste, in honour of Augustus Cæsar. Christianity also, at a later period, left the impress of its piety and genius. Ascending the eastern brow of the Samaritan mount, one of the objects that first met our view was the lofty remains of a Christian church, said to have been built over the body of John the Baptist. Standing afterwards upon the western brow, at a mile's distance from this church, where the beauties of nature eclipsed those of art, I cast my eye along the valleys of Sharon towards the distant Cæsarea and the waters of the Mediterranean. The valleys and the waters live; but cities perish, leaving a sad memorial. All around us the dust was literally sown with columns: some prostrate at full length on the ground; some partially buried and projecting from the side of the hill; some standing erect in rows and at stated intervals, but without capitals, like wounded and mutilated soldiers on the field of battle; some leaning towards the ground, as if they were borne down with hearts of sorrow, and were mourning the loss of their former greatness. They reminded me of those newly-cleared fields, where the old stumps remain—the rough and ancient masters of the soil—refusing with stubbornness to be removed, and projecting raggedly and mournfully from the earth, in all diversities of position.[b]

13—16. (13) **Lachish**, 2 Ki. xviii. 13, 14. **beginning**, *etc.*, or "the first place in the kingdom of Judah to adopt idolatry of the northern kingdom." (14) **Moresheth-gath**, a place belonging to, or near, the Philistine Gath. **Achzib**, Jos. xv. 44. **lie**, *lit.* a deceptive brook that dries up and disappoints the thirsty wayfarer. (15) **Mareshah**, Jos. xv. 44. **Adullam**, 2 Chr. xi. 7. (16) **bald**, addressed to Judah. **poll thee**, or shave thy hair. **eagle**, better, *vulture*, wh. is distinguished for its bald head.

Samaria (*continued*).—Art, genius, power, have been here:

and his tears to the gaze of enemies."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 8. "Or, 'ostriches.' It is affirmed by travellers of good credit, that ostriches make a fearful, screeching, lamentable noise. 'During the lonesome part of the night, they often make a very doleful and hideous noise. I have often heard them groan, as if they were in the greatest agonies: an action beautifully alluded to by the Prophet Micah.' (Shaw.)"—*Burder.*

A man that comes hungry to his meal, feeds heartily on the meat set before him, not regarding the metal or form of the platter wherein it is served; who, afterwards when his stomach is satisfied, begins to play with the dish, or to read sentences on his trencher.

b Prof. Upham.

"Mr. Bruce has given us an account of an eagle, known in Ethiopia only by the name nisser, eagle; but by him called the golden eagle; by the vulgar, abou duch'n, father long-beard, from the tuft of hair

under his chin. He is a very large bird. 'A forked brush of strong hair, divided at the point into two, proceeded from the cavity of his lower jaw, at the beginning of his throat. He had the smallest eye I ever remember to have seen in a large bird, the aperture being scarcely half an inch. The crown of his head was bare or bald, so was the front where the billand skull joined.' This is the bird alluded to by the Prophet."—*Burder.*

idolatry with its abominations, wealth with its luxurious refinements, art with its creative and adjustive eye, tyranny with its kings, the just and purifying dispensation of the Old Testament with the denunciations of its Elijah and Elisha, and the peace, forgiveness, and purity of the New with its early and humble teachers. The weary foot of the Son of God, the Teacher from another world, the man unknown, has left its pleasure on these hills and valleys. He came from the Jordan to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to Galilee; and He "must needs go through Samaria." The glory of Samaria has departed. Not, perhaps, in the absolute sense of the term; for something still remains. Beauty with diminished brightness lingers even here. But still the physical change is great. The rock, from which ancient fertility once sprung up, is now laid bare; and the flower refuses to grow upon the rocks. The moral change is greater—a change which is seen in other parts of the East, but is peculiarly painful when witnessed in this land. The heart of the Christian saddens and sinks within him when he names it. The name of Mahomet is substituted for that of Christ; and the precepts of the Koran, in this part of Palestine, as well as in other parts, have taken the place of the sublime doctrines and precepts of the Gospel. But it cannot be so always. I cannot think with those who shake their heads and speak discouragingly. Hope is, in some sense, the lifespring of the soul, and is the last thing to be allowed to die. And I may perhaps add that the hope is always defective which is less expansive than love. The empire of love is the universe—it lives and acts where there is anything to be saved or benefited—and it is the nature of love to carry hope in its bosom."[a]

a Prof. Upham.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—3. (1) devise, intimating deliberate *design* in the outworking of evil. power . . hand, Ge. xxxi. 29; Pr. iii. 29.[a] (2) covet fields, *etc.*, Is. v. 8. oppress, *etc.*, *i.e.* defraud him both of his liberty and his property. (3) family, or race. remove . . necks, the coming evil is likened to a yoke fixed on a beast's neck. time is evil, being characterised by moral evil it must be visited with evil consequences.

Consequence of besetting sins.—Just as certainly as a single match may explode a whole magazine, or lay a town in ashes—just as surely as a single leak may sink the proudest vessel that ever marched the seas—so one solitary sin, if suffered to invade and rule the heart, will destroy the piety of the holiest saint. If other illustrations of this principle were needed, we have them unhappily in abundance. Look at Solomon. How devout and holy before his "heart went after strange women!" How shameless a libertine thereafter! Look at Judas, the Balaam of the New Testament. So corrupted and accursed did he become, through the sin of greed, that he could sell his Redeemer for thirty pieces of silver. Look at Demas. Nay, look not so far away; look around you, at those whom you know as having once run well, but also, alas! as having been utterly overthrown by some besetting sin. One was overcome by the sin of intem-

a "Might, not right, is what regulates their conduct."—*Fausset.*

"The only cause why you forget so fast as you hear, and of all the sermons which you have heard, have scarce the substance of one in your hearts, to comfort or counsel you when you have need, is because you went from sermon to dinner, and never thought any more of the matter; as though it were enough to hear; like sieves, which hold water no

perance. Another fell like Demas. When you first knew him, he was an humble-minded, devoted, zealous Christian; but God greatly prospered him in business, and he was not proof against "the deceitfulness of riches." His love of money increased in the ratio of his increasing possessions, and ate away his piety as doth a canker. Young women also you have known, bidding fair for honourable distinction in the ranks of Christian devotedness, who afterwards yielded to the seductions of worldly pleasures as they solicited them in the voluptuous dance or the drama; who, like other moths, were blinded with the blaze, and at last came forth with the wings of their spiritual life all scorched and shrivelled, if indeed through the mercy of God they did not perish in the flames.[a]

4—6. (4) **shall one take**, *i.e.* one of your enemies. In a mocking and derisive spirit they would take up your own lamentations. **lament**, *etc.*, Heb. *naha. nehi*, *nihyah*, a repetition representing the continuous and monotonous wail.[a] "Shall wail a wail of woe."[b] **changed the portion**, or removed His people from their inheritance. **turning**, *etc.*, *i.e.* turning us into captivity, He has given our fields to our enemies. (5) **cast a cord**, for measuring the allotments.[c] (6) **prophesy**, *Heb.* "drop not your words," comp. De. xxxii. 2. **to them**, *i.e.* to the godless people. **take shame**, better, remove from them the disgrace of going into captivity.[d]

A parable.—The stones from the wall said, we come from the mountains far away, from the sides of the craggy hills. Fire and water worked on us for ages, but only made us crags. Human hands have made us into a dwelling where the children of your immortal race are born, and suffer, and rejoice, and find rest and the view of infinite wisdom; the small things may be as important in their place, as necessary for instrumentally accomplishing God's pleasure, as the great. It is a small thing in itself that Lord Mounteagle is visited by some stirrings of conscience and affection; but is the instrument in God's hand of frustrating the Gunpowder Plot—of saving the British King, Lords, and Commons from destruction—of preserving the British empire for its lofty part in Providence as the bulwark of Protestant Christendom. What thing is in itself more small and (to our apprehension) accidental than the cackling of a goose? And yet that is the instrument in God's hand of rousing Titus Manlius at midnight to discover that the Gauls are stealing into the citadel, and so of saving Rome from perishing in her infancy, and preserving her for those mighty destinies, in reference to the whole world and Church, which God's purpose had assigned to her—which His Word has prescribed for her—as the empress city, the queen of the nations.[e]

7—9. (7) **straitened**, or shortened, Is. lix. 1; Zec. iv. 6. **good . . uprightly?** implying that if God's words were of a *threatening* character it must be bec. the people were *not* walking uprightly. (8) **of late**, Heb. *yesterday*. There is a poss. reference to the recent invasion of Judah by Pekah.[a] The fig. of the *v.* is taken from the acts of the highway robber. **robe . . garment**, both the outer and inner coats.[b] (9) **women**, *etc.*, 2 Chr. xxviii. 8. **my glory**, the temporal blessings wh. were the sign of God's favour and covenant.

longer than they are in a river. What a shame is this, to remember every clause in your lease, and every point in your father's will; nay, to remember an old tale so long as you live, though it be long since you heard it, and the lessons which ye hear now, will be gone within this hour, that you may ask, what hath stolen my sermon from me?"—*Henry Smith.*

b T. Akroyd.

a Fausset.

b Pusey.

c Jos. xiv. 1, 5; Ju. i. 3; see also De. xxxii. 8, 9.

d "The meaning is prob.: —(The oppressors) say to them that prophesy, Prophesy not: (but) they will go on prophesying; (yet) it is not for the sake of these men, whose shame shall not depart, that they shall prophesy."—*Spk. Com.*

e Macgregor's "Christian Doctrine."

a 2 Chr. xviii. 5, 8.

b "The words import that the Israelites invaded their countrymen of Judæa, who had given them no provocation, and were willing to live peaceably with

them; and in a violent manner stripped them of all their substance, even to their wearing apparel."—*Lowth.*

v. 7. *B. Beddowe*, viii. 133.

"With women worth the being won, the softest lover ever best succeeds."—*Shirley.*

"But what, alas! are woman's vows? Fit to be written but on air, or on the stream that swiftly flows."—*Cicero.*

[a] *Matthew Arnold.*

Woman looks for worth in men.—

She smiles and smiles, and will not sigh,
While we for hopeless passion die;
Yet she could love, those eyes declare,
Were but men nobler than they are.

Eagerly once her gracious ken
Was turn'd upon the sons of men;
But light the serious visage grew—
She look'd and smiled and saw them through.

Our petty souls, our strutting wits,
Our labour'd puny passion-fits—
Ah, may she scorn them still, till we
Scorn them as bitterly as she!

Yet oh, that Fate would let her see
One of some worthier race than we—
One for whose sake she once might prove
How deeply she who scorns can love.

His eyes be like the starry lights—
His voice like sounds of summer nights—
In all his lovely mien let pierce
The magic of the universe.

And she to him will reach her hand,
And gazing in his eyes will stand.
And know her friend, and weep for glee,
And cry—Long, long I've look'd for thee!

Then will she weep—with smiles, till then,
Coldly she mocks the sons of men.
Till then her lovely eyes maintain
Their gay, unwavering, deep disdain.[c]

10, 11. (10) **arise .. depart,** into captivity. **not your rest,** it can be no secure resting-place for you in your wilfulness and wickedness. As a sin-stricken land it is under Divine judgments.[a] (11) **spirit**[b] **and falsehood,** or, in a lying spirit. **prophesy .. drink,** promising you abundance of self-indulgent things. These are the Prophets whom the people would approve and accept.

The world not our rest (*v.* 10).—I. Why we can never have our rest in this world. 1. Because our continuance on earth is short and uncertain; 2. Our life on earth has many changes, disappointments, and sorrows; 3. It is not a satisfying portion for the soul; 4. The prevalence of sin. II. The exhortation, "Arise ye, and depart." 1. In the spirit of your minds; 2. In the tenor of your conduct. Apply:—(1) Congratulate those who have ceased to seek rest in this world; (2) Warn those who are still seeking rest on earth; (3) Some who have lost their former rest have not found another.[c]—*A call to depart* (*v.* 10).—I. The unhappiness that belongs to human life lessened—1. By ignorance; 2. By insensibility; 3. By prosperity; 4. By employment; 5. By friendship; 6. By religion. II. What are the causes of the unhappiness of life. 1. The infinite disproportion between our desires and our power; 2. The weakness of our judgment continually making mistakes; 3. One evil destroys the pleasure of almost all the good for a time; 4. Almost every

[a] "Since such are your doings, my sentence on you is irrevocable, however distasteful to you: ye who have cast out others from their homes and possessions, must arise, depart, and be cast out of your own, for this is not your rest."—*Fausset.*

Le. xviii. 25, 28, 29.

[b] Or, "walking in wind and falsehood."

v. 10. *Dr. J. Donne*, iv. 135; *J. Mason*, 309, 335; *F. Wranghan*, i. 401; *Dr. J. Cumming, Voices of Night*, 68.

[c] *J. Foote.*

good has its peculiar kindred evil; 5. Whatever good is given only excites the infinite wish for more; 6. The hazardous uncertainty of everything future; 7. Sin is the mighty evil that destroys and transforms everything; 8. The soul is not at home here. III. What is to be done? IV. Arise ye, and depart.[d]

No rest on earth—The prairie on fire.—One night, ages ago, a fire broke out in an American wilderness. A spark dropped on dry leaves, the lighted leaves flew before the wind, the flames raced along the grass, and glanced from tree to tree, till all the forest was ablaze, and night was turned into a terrible day. Certain Indians, driven out of their hunting-grounds by the red storm, fled for their lives: hour after hour they ran, until, half dead with fatigue, they reached a noble river; they forded it, and after scaling the opposite bank, their chief struck his tent-pole into the ground, threw himself on the cool turf, and cried, "Alabama!"—"Here we may rest!" But that chief was no prophet. The land was claimed by hostile tribes. The fugitives reached no resting-place there; they were soon beset by foes more relentless than the elements: having escaped the fury of the fire, they perished from the cruelty of man, and where they looked for the still delight of a home, found but the quiet of a grave. Let this tradition serve as a parable. Earth has no Alabama for the soul. "Arise, depart; for this is not your rest."[e]

12, 13. (12) **assemble,** again, after the objects of the captivity have been accomplished in you. **sheep of Bozrah,** a district famous for its rich pastures.[a] **great noise,** *comp.* the bleating of a large flock.[b] (13) **breaker,** the leader who shall break down every obstacle in the way of their return. We may assume a full reference to the Messiah, but poss. a first reference to Cyrus, who, by the taking of Bab., broke down the great obstacle in the way of the Jews' return. **Lord . . them,** Is. lii. 12.

The breaker is before (*v.* 13).—I. Since Christ has gone before us things are not as they would have been had He not passed that way. II. Every foe is conquered. III. The power of hurtful things is destroyed. IV. We have but to march on and take the prey.[c]

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—4. (1) **heads . . princes,** official rulers, magistrates. Those who should be *examples* to the people. (2) **pluck . . bones,** robbing those who come to the judgment-seat, instead of doing them justice.[a] (3) **eat,** *etc.*, the Prophet likens their cruel outrages to cannibal feasting.[b] (4) **then,** *i.e.* in the time of God's judgment, see ch. ii. 3. **not hear,** bec. they will only cry in *pain*, not in *penitence*.

The old French régime.—One of the greatest abuses of the French Government, previous to the Revolution, was to be found in the administration of justice, which, from the reign of Louis XII., was really bought and sold. When the sale of an office took place, the purchaser petitioned the crown for a grant of it; and when that grant was signed, he paid, besides the price which the vendor was to receive for it, a sum of money into the royal treasury. The amount of that sum varied from one

d J. Foster.

As the needle in a compass trembles till it settles in the north point, so the heart of a sinner can get no rest but in Christ.

e Stanford.

a 2 Ki. iii. 4.

b "He says *men*, in order that the comparison of Israel to a flock may be better understood."—*Wordsworth.*

vv. 12, 13. *J. Glas*, iii. 241; *E. Erskine*, iii. 434.

c C. H. Spurgeon.

a "Who exercise all manner of cruelty upon their inferiors, as if they were so many butchers cutting meat for the shambles."—*Lowth.*

b Comp. Eze. xxiv. 3—5.

thousand to two thousand French crowns. A worse feature in the French administration of justice was the *épices*, or presents made by the parties in a cause to the judges before whom it was tried. To secure the judges the proportion which the suitors were to contribute towards the expense of justice, it was provided, by an ordinance of St. Louis, that, at the commencement of a suit, each party should deposit in court the amount of one-tenth part of the property in dispute; that the tenth deposited by the unsuccessful party should be paid over to the judges on their passing sentence; and that the tenth of the successful party should then be returned to him. This was varied by subsequent ordinances: insensibly it became a custom for the successful party to wait on the judges, after sentence was passed, and, as an acknowledgment of their attention to the cause, to present them with a box of sweetmeats, which were then called *épices*, or spices. By degrees this custom became a legal perquisite of the judges; and it was converted into a present of money, and required by the judges before the cause came to a hearing: *Non deliberetur donec solventur species*, say some of the ancient registers of the Parliaments of France. The practice was afterwards abolished; the amount of the *épices* was regulated; and, in many cases, the taking of them was absolutely forbidden. Speaking generally, they were not payable till final judgment; and, if the matter were not heard in court, but referred to a judge for him to hear and report to the court upon it, he was entitled to the whole of the *épices*, and the other judges were entitled to no part of them. Those among the magistrates who were most punctual and diligent in their attendance in court, and the discharge of their duty, had most causes referred to them, and were therefore richest in *épices*.[c]

The Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Charles I., was found dead one day, with her head leaning on the Bible, and the Bible open at the words, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Her monument in Newport church consists of a female figure reclining her head on a marble book, with the above text engraved on the book.

c Percy Anec.

5—7. (5) **bite . . teeth**, ch. ii. 11. "The Heb. word is always used to denote biting venomously, like a serpent, or to perform a malicious act."[a] **cry peace**, their words and their works in no way agree. **putteth not**, by neglecting, or refusing, to give these princes *bribes*.[b] (6) **night**, *etc.*, the fig. of calamities.[c] (7) **cover their lips**, a usual token of shame and sorrow.[d]

a Spk. Com.

b 1 Sa. ii. 16.

c "Calamities shall prisson you so overwhelming as to compel you to cease pretending to *divine*."—*Fausset.*

Preachers and preaching.—The injustice of the vulgar tone of preaching is not less flagrant to Jesus than it is to the souls which it profanes. The preachers do not see that they make His Gospel not glad, and shear Him of the locks of beauty and the attributes of heaven. When I see a majestic Epaminondas or Washington—when I see among my contemporaries a true orator, an upright judge, a dear friend—when I vibrate to the melody and fancy of a poem, I see beauty that is to be desired. And so lovely, and with yet more entire consent of my human being, sounds in my ear the severe music of the bards that have sung of the true God in all ages. Now, do not degrade the life and dialogues of Christ out of the circle of this charm—by insulation and peculiarity let them lie, as they befall, alive and warm, part of human life, and of the landscape, and of the cheerful day. Another defect of the traditionary and limited way of using the mind of Christ is that the moral nature—that law of laws, whose revelations introduce greatness, yea, God Himself, into the open soul—is not explored as the fountain of the established teaching in society. Men have come to speak of the revelation as somewhat long ago given and done, as if God were dead. The injury

d Le. xiii. 45; Ezé. xxiv. 17, 22. "They shall be so ashamed of themselves as not to dare to open their mouths or boast of the name of prophet."—*Calvin.*

"My aim in every sermon is a stout and lusty call to sinners, to quicken the saints, and to be made a universal blessing to all."—*Rowland Hill.*

to faith throttles the preacher, and the goodliest of institutions becomes an uncertain and inarticulate voice. It is very certain that it is the effect of conversation with the beauty of the soul to beget a desire and need to impart to others the same knowledge and love. If utterance is denied, the thought lies like a burden on the man. Always the seer is a sayer. Somehow his dream is told. Somehow he publishes it with solemn joy. Sometimes with pencil on canvas; sometimes with chisel on stone; sometimes in towers and aisles of granite, his soul's worship is builded; sometimes in anthems of indefinite music; but clearest and most permanent in words. The man enamoured of this excellency becomes its priest or poet." The office is coeval with the world. But observe the condition, the spiritual limitation of the office. The Spirit only can teach. Not any profane man, not any sensual, not any liar, not any slave can teach; but only He can give who has; He only can create who is. The man on whom the soul descends, through whom the soul speaks, alone can teach. Courage, piety, love, wisdom, can teach; and every man can open his door to these angels, and they shall bring him the gift of tongues. But the man who aims to speak as books enable, as synods use, as the fashion guides, and as interest commands, babbles. Let him hush.[e]

"The waters of happiness are not for a luxurious bath where a man may lie till, like flax steeped too long, the very fibre be rooted out of him; a quick bath will brace him, and he will come out refreshed for work."—*Alexander Maclaren.*

e Emerson.

8—12. (8) **I am**, *i.e.* I, Micah, as God's true and faithful Prophet. (9) **pervert all equity**, judgment is right *according to law*, equity is right between *man and man*. With both the magistrate has to deal. (10) **blood**, Eze. xxii. 27; Zep. iii. 3. (11) **reward**, *etc.*, in all cases money, not right, nor the fear of God, ruled the rulers. **learn**, in their self-deception, or their hypocrisy. (12) **ploughed as a field**, Is. xxvi. 18.[a]

Mount Zion (*v.* 12).—We had been to examine the hill, which now bears the name of Zion; it is situated on the south side of Jerusalem, part of it being excluded by the wall of the present city, which passes over the top of the mount. If this be indeed Mount Zion, the prophecy concerning it, that the plough should pass over it, has been fulfilled to the letter; for such labours were actually going on when we arrived.[b]

a "It has been remarked that when this prophecy was delivered it must have seemed a most daring utterance. This hill appears to have been densely crowded with the best and strongest edifices in Jerusalem. But luxuriant crops of grain may now be found growing on all the south-eastern face of the mount."—*Bib. Things.*

v. 8. *J. Randall*, 123.

v 12. *Dr. A. McCaul*, 173.

b Clarke.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1, 2. (1) **last days**, *etc.*, comp. Is. ii. 2, etc. The usual prophetic expression for the times of Messiah. **people . . flow**, "heathen shall resort thither to be instructed in the way of salvation." (2) **law**, or teaching, instruction. **word of the Lord**, or the Gospel message.[a]

A missionary discourse (*vv.* 1—3).—I. The Church rendered conspicuous to all. 1. She shall be exalted above the hills; 2. She shall be established. II. A disposition in all towards the Church. 1. Friendly co-operation; 2. A definite and sacred object; 3. Proper intentions and correct views; 4. Right dispositions; 5. Confidence in the excellency of the Divine instructions. III. The blessings resulting from these great events.[b]

a Lu. xxiv. 47.

vv. 1—4. *W. Cradock, Divine Drops*, 122.

b Gamma in 400 Sks.

3, 4. (3) **beat . . hooks**, *comp.* Is. ii. 4; Joel iii. 10.[a] (4) **sit . . tree**, a poetical figure of perfect security and quietness.[b]

a "This prophecy began to be fulfilled in the

peaceful days of the first appearance of the Gospel. The world was in a quiet condition when Christ came to visit it. That universal peace was an earnest of the peace in earth and heaven wh. is the fruit of the Gospel of Christ." —*Wordsworth.*

b "The fig tree affords a thick shade, and is, on this account, a favourite resort of the family, where they may often be seen seated on mats, partaking of a meal, or entertaining friends. So the expression denotes at once security, domestic enjoyment, and competence." —*Van Lennep.*

c Dr. J. Edmond.

d Murray.

e Burder.

v. 5. *Dr. J. Goodman*, 148; *S. Lavington*, i. 490.

"Some revivals resemble underground rivers, running unknown to everybody till they discover themselves. Most revivals of God's work I have thought begin in this secret way." —*J. Caughey.*

a Burnet.

a "The tower of the flock is the Church of Christ, wh. had its origin in Jerusalem, and to which all nations are gathered, so as to

mouth . . spoken, therefore we may be quite sure that it will come to pass.

Millennial week-days (*vv.* 3, 4).—I. Here is a picture of peace. II. Here is a picture of happy industry. III. Here is a picture of promised comfort and safety.[c]

The vine and the fig tree.—When we had proceeded some distance, the sounds of the somtora coming upon our ears indicated that the scene of rejoicing was close at hand. My companion stopped at a house with a mean little door, through which, having entered, she led the way into a large open patio, or courtyard, shaded on one side by a trellis of cane work, supporting heavy bunches of luscious grapes. In the midst of the court grew, in full vigour, a verdant fig tree, spreading abroad its expansive branches, and affording an agreeable shelter from the oppressive rays of the noon-day sun. The vine and the fig tree are invariably found in the Moorish patio. The family grow up under this shade; the little ones sport, with the thoughtless glee of childhood, among the foliage, and the grave elders pass the greater part of their time in more serious conversation, and sometimes, doubtless, mere trifling gossip. They dwell under their own vine and fig tree, none daring to make them afraid.[d]—"This expression most probably alludes to the delightful Eastern arbours, which were partly composed of vines; and the agreeable retreat which was enjoyed under them might also be found under their fig trees. Norden expressly speaks of vine arbours as common in the Egpytian gardens (Vol. I. p. 71), and the Prænestine pavement, in Dr. Shaw, gives us the figure of an ancient one."[e]

5—7. (5) **for all,** better, "for although all," etc. **and we,** better, "yet we," etc. (6) **assemble,** the people in their own land again. **gather her,** feminine bec. the metaphor is taken from *sheep* wearied out with a journey. (7) **a remnant,** Zep. iii. 19. **reign,** *etc.*, Da. vii. 14.

Formal religion.—Nothing more arrests the notice of a stranger, on entering Sinde, than the severe attention of the people to the forms of religion, as enjoined by the prophet of Arabia. In all places, the meanest and poorest of mankind may be seen, at the appointed hours, turned towards Mecca, offering up their prayers. I have observed a boatman quit the laborious duty of dragging the vessel against the stream, and retire to the shore, wet and covered with mud, to perform his genuflexions. In the smallest villages the sound of the "mowuzzun," or crier, summoning true believers to prayers, may be heard, and the Mohammedans within reach of the sonorous sound suspend, for the moment, their employment, that they may add their "Amen" to the solemn sentence when concluded. The effect is pleasing and impressive; but, as has often happened in other countries at a like stage of civilisation, the moral qualities of the people do not keep pace with this fervency of devotion.[a]

8—10. (8) **tower of the flock,**[a] allusion is to the high wooden tower, erected in large pastures, from which the scattered flocks might be watched. The hill of Zion is so regarded in this poetical figure. (9) **cry aloud,** at the sorrow so soon to come on thee. (10) **be delivered,** from calamities, bec. from the sins wh. involved them.

National bereavements improved (*v.* 9).—I. We are reminded by this event that the most exalted human honours can afford no exemption from the common lot of humanity. II. We are reminded by the sacred services of this day, as connected with the interment of our lamented monarch, that there are durable grounds of consolation in the religion of Christ amidst the desolations of earthly glory. III. It is our duty to acknowledge in the house of God the kindness of Providence in those numerous events which have occurred in this reign, and which have been subservient to the prosperity of the kingdom of Christ, as—1. The extended nautical discoveries ; 2. Some of the consequences of the French revolution ; 3. For the recognition of the principles of religious liberty ; 4. The success which has crowned the efforts for the diffusion of the Gospel of Christ. IV. We are reminded of the enormity of our national sins and of the necessity of a national repentance. 1. Profligacy ; 2. Falsehood ; 3. Blasphemy ; 4. Infidelity ; 5. National ingratitude.[b]

make one flock and one shepherd."—*A. Lapide.*

b E. Parsons, jun.

Constant revival, no autumn, no winter, but perpetual summer, is what the Church needs, and which must precede the coming millennium.

11—13. (11) now also, *i.e.* after thy restoration thou wilt find many enemies, but they will not prevail against thee. defiled, with idolatrous enticements. (12) gather . . sheaves, and set them under Divine judgments.[a] (13) horn, symbol of destructive power.[b] hoofs brass, threshing was done by the treading of the feet. consecrate, or *devote.*

How to make a good collection.—Rowland Hill once preached in aid of a certain meritorious institution. At the conclusion of the sermon, just before the plates were handed round for the collection, he made this short address to the congregation :—"From the great sympathy I have witnessed in your countenances and the strict attention you have honoured me with, there is only one thing I am afraid of—that some of you may be inclined to give too much. Now it is my duty to inform you that justice, though not so pleasant, yet should always be a prior virtue to generosity : therefore, as you will all be immediately waited upon in your respective pews, I wish to have it thoroughly understood that no person will think of putting anything into the plate who cannot pay his debts." It is needless to say that these remarks produced an overflowing collection.

a "However great the numbers of the foe, they are all but as *one sheaf* ready to be threshed."—*Calvin.*

b "Zion being compared to an ox treading corn, and an ox's strength lying in the horns, her strength is implied by giving her a horn of iron."—*Fausset.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1—3. (1) daughter of troops, or city having many troops. he hath laid, *i.e.* the enemy. against us, *i.e.* the people shut up in the city, including the Prophet himself. smite . . cheek, an act of insult.[a] (2) Beth-lehem Ephratah,[b] Mat. ii. 6. To be distinguished from Bethlehem in Zebulun. out of thee, a little and humble village. goings . . old, "it is hard to imagine the Prophet's intention in using these words if they mean anything less than the pre-existence of the Messiah."[c] (3) she . . forth, *i.e.* the Virgin mother.

The external existence and Divine manifestations of the Son of God (*v.* 2).—I. Consider that essential perfection of the Deity which is attributed to Him. II. Those special manifestations of His glory which are recorded—1. In the creation of all things ; 2. In His covenant with His Father ; 3. In His communion with men. Application :—(1) These considerations may prove to you

a 1 Ki. xxii. 24; Job xvi. 10, etc.

b Bethlehem means *house of bread*, and Ephratah means *fruitful.*

c Spk. Com.

"This is an illustrious testimony to the Divine generation, before all time, of Christ the Eternal Son of God."—*Wordsworth.*

that the Saviour is worthy of your love ; (2) Worthy of your confidence ; (3) Worthy of your service.[d]

4—7. (4) feed, *i.e.* feed, or rule, the flock.[a] abide, or be converted, or return from the captivity. be great, Lu. i. 32. (5) peace, *comp.* Is. ix. 6.[b] Assyrian, prob. put here as the representative of all Israel's foes. seven . . eight, an idiom for a full and sufficient number. principal men, *lit.* anointed men, such as the Apostles. (6) waste, or eat up, as with their flocks the shepherds do.[c] land of Nimrod, a wider district, including Assyria. entrances, gates, or passes. (7) remnant of Jacob, prob. the Apostles and Jewish disciples of Christ are meant. dew, Ps. cx. 3.

The paucity, position, and power of the true (*v.* 7).—The truth of the text is partially fulfilled by the Jews. 1. They are but a remnant of the human family ; 2. They dwell in remnants, here and there a little ; 3. They dwell in the midst of many people ; 4. They are preserved as a witness on behalf of heaven and its truth. It is also fulfilled in the history and experience of the Christian Church. 1. The paucity of the true ; 2. The position of the true ; 3. The purpose of the true.[d]

8—12. (8) as a lion, the type of irresistible strength.[a] (9) thine hand, the emblem of power. (10) horses . . chariots, things pertaining to war : and things wh. marked man's confidence in *himself*.[b] (11) cities . . strongholds, also signs of man's self-confidence. (12) witchcrafts, Ex. xxii. 18. soothsayers, Is. ii. 6.

A lion fight.—A Liverpool paper gives the following account : "On Wednesday evening, just before the animals were fed, a most extraordinary scene took place—a scene which few of the number present would have missed for more than their price of admission. Mr. Carter having gone through his performances, left the den, as usual, accompanied by one of the leopards. He had hardly been off the stage a minute, when the lion and tiger commenced a terrific fight. The scene was most extraordinary ; the whole of the company assembled on the stage prepared to take flight, and the audience were in a moment in the greatest excitement. Mr. Carter, hearing something unusual, rushed on the stage, and in an instant was in the cage, and threw himself between the combatants, felling the lion on one side, and hurling the tiger on the other. A wild burst of applause rewarded the daring feat ; and was loudly continued, when the excited animals were seen to cower into the corners of the den in the most abject state of subserviency. The effect of this was remarkable in the extreme. In a cage hardly ten feet square, stood a man, unarmed and alone, so perfect a master of the wildest and most savage creatures of the forest, that they forgot their animosity to each other, and actually trembled with fear at his presence. The attitude of the 'lion-tamer,' and the position of the animals immediately after they were parted, formed one of the finest and most interesting groups ever beheld."[c]

13—15. (13) graven images, ch. i. 7.[a] standing images, or statues.[b] (14) groves,[c] circles of trees surrounding an idol-shrine. cities, marg. *enemies*. (15) heathen, here the rejectors of the new and gracious revelation in Messiah. Nations that have not hearkened to My warnings.[d]

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d J. Blackburn.

a Is. xl. 9—11.

b Comp. Eph. ii. 14.

c "The more widely the Gospel of Christ spreads itself among the nations of the world, the more bitter will be the spirit of unbelief and ungodliness."—*Kiel.*

v. 5. *D. Patterson*, 98.

d E. D. Green.

a "What characterises the Messiah, as well as His works, is the perfect union of force with gentleness. He was the lion of the tribe of Judah, yet the lamb of God."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The war chariot and the convenient carriage, once so common in these lands, have totally disappeared."—*Van Lennep.*

vv. 10—13. *J. Webster*, 119.

c Whitecross.

a Ex. xx. 4.
b Le. xxvi. 1.
c "The Circassians celebrate their religious ceremonies exclusively in sacred groves, where an emblem, shaped like a cross, is care-

Heathenism in Africa.—Africa is the home of superstition. It does not take the form of a regular mythology, or embody itself in the grotesque images of Hindostan. Any trifle which awakens fear, or to which mystery may attach, is an object of reverence or worship. Spirits, both bad and good, are imagined to exist everywhere. The rocks, trees, mountains, rivers, caverns, and groves, may all or each be the home of a spiritual being. Such spots are sacred. Every passer-by will deposit an offering, however small, to show his respect or to deprecate the anger of the spiritual inhabitant. The bodies of living creatures are thought to be the favourite abodes of the spirits. At one place the monkeys that live in the wood around the graveyard are thought to be animated with departed spirits. Those monkeys, therefore, are sacred animals. Nobody would dare to touch them; and the creatures seem to know this, for they are quite tame, and not a little impudent. At another place there are many crocodiles, in which, as the people think, departed spirits live. These, too, are sacred, and the natives treat them so kindly, that the scaly monsters will come out of their holes when called, will allow themselves to be handled, and will follow any one who carries a fowl in his hand, for half a mile from his den. At Calabar and Bonny the shark is sacred, for the same reason; and at Benin it is so tame, that it will come up every day to the river bank for food. And what is still more strange is the fact, that at St. Catherine, a species of tiger burrows near the town, and walks through its streets at night, without disturbing the people, who believe these fierce creatures to be sacred. Experience shows that the African is peculiarly receptive of religious impressions. His intellectual powers are wholly uncultivated. He has not worked out for himself a system of religious belief. What he believes is the result of feeling, and not of conviction.

fully preserved. When a warrior returns home victorious, or has escaped some impending calamity, he repairs to the grove, and presents a thank-offering to the god."—*Van Lennep*

d So trans. LXX. "As the several nations that the king of Assyria placed in Samaria made idols of their own, and set them up for worship; so we may see the different classes of men in these days, with their idols of worship—the ambitious, the covetous, the pleasure-taker, the miser, the scientific, and others, with their respective idols, times and places of worship; as earnest as any of the worshippers of the true God."—*John Bate.*

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—5. (1) **before the mountains,** regarded as the witnesses of God's dealings all through the ages.[a] (2) **controversy,** a ground for complaint against them. **strong,** better, *enduring.* (3) **wearied thee,** by too hard exactions,[b] Is. xliii. 22; Mal. i. 13. (4) **house of servants,** Ex. xiii. 3. (5) **Balak,** *etc.*, Nu. xxii. 5, xxiii. 7.

A great controversy (*v.* 2).—I. The appeal. 1. Common in its form, Is. i. 3; Jer. viii. 7; Pro. vi. 6; Lu. xii. 24, etc.; 2. Sublime in conception; 3. Humiliating in substance. II. The parties. 1. God as the moral Governor of the universe, and men as His subjects. III. The case: the question is whether God has done us any injury—1. By the strictness of His laws; 2. By the harshness of His providential dispensations; 3. By the severity of the punishments He has threatened in a future world. Apply:—(1) We have no just complaints against God; (2) God has many just complaints against us.

a Comp. Is. i. 2.

b "'Tis then we hear the voice of God within, pleading with care and sin: Child of My love, how have I wearied thee? Why wilt thou err from Me? Have I not brought thee from the house of slaves, parting the drowning waves, and set My saints before thee in the way, lest thou shouldst faint or stray?"—*Keble.*

6—9. (6) **wherewith,** *etc.*, the question supposed to be asked of the Prophet by the people with whom he pleads. They would know what will appease Jehovah. **calves,** *etc.*, Le. ix. 2, 3. (7) **rivers of oil,** this was used with the meat-offerings.[a] **my**

a Le. ii. 1, 4, 15.

b There is every reason to believe that the Jews

actually offered human sacrifices in the Valley of Hinnom.

"These two *vv.* are an exact description of the temper of hypocrites and habitual sinners, who hope to obtain God's favour by performing the external duties of religion; and are willing to purchase their own pardon upon any terms but that of reforming their lives."—*Lowth.*

"Oft, beneath the saintly veil, the votary of sin may lurk unseen, and to that eye alone which penetrates the inmost heart, revealed"—*Bally.*

vv. 5—7. *Dr. Dwight*, i. 75.

v. 6. *S. Augustine*, vii. 267; *Bp. Ravenscroft*, ii. 195.

vv. 6—8. *A. Farindon*, i. 130; *Du Bosc*, i. 531; *Bp. Reynolds*, v. 513; *Abp. Tillotson*, vi. 298.

[c] *Stems and Twigs.*
[d] *Tupper.*

[a] *Mystery of Evil.*

"The ermine rather chooseth to die than defile her beautiful skin. There is more evil in a drop of sin than in a sea of affliction: affliction is but like a rent in a coat, sin a prick at the heart. In affliction there is

firstborn, as was required in the Moloch rites.[b] (8) showed thee, De. x. 12. do justly, *etc.*, these being moral, not ceremonial, duties. walk . . God, implying habitual converse. (9) man of wisdom, *i.e.* the man who is wise will easily see God's authority in this demand for moral obedience. rod, or threatened judgment.

Is it not true? (*v.* 8).—I. The revelation. 1. What He has revealed; 2. How He has revealed these things—by nature, by history, by Jesus Christ, by our own experience. II. The requisition. 1. He requires us to demonstrate our knowledge; 2. To display this in a particular way, to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God.[c]

Sacrifice of the firstborn.—The inhabitants of Florida were guilty of this horrid practice. The cruel ceremony was performed in the presence of one of their princes, or *caciques*, called *paraoustis*. The victim was always a male child. The mother covered her face, weeping and groaning over the stone against which the child is to be dashed in pieces. The women who accompanied her sung and danced in a circle, while another woman stood up in the middle of the ring, holding the child in her arms, and showed it at a distance to the *paracousti*, who probably was esteemed a representative of the sun, or deity to which the victim was offered; after which the sacrifice was made. The Peruvians of quality, says More, and those, too, of meaner sort, would sacrifice their firstborn to redeem their own life, when the priest pronounced that they were mortally sick.

Humility described.—

Humility is the softening shadow before the statue of Excellence,
And lieth lowly on the ground, beloved and lovely as the violet:
Humility is the fair-haired maid, that calleth Worth her brother,
The gentle silent nurse, that fostereth infant virtues:
Humility bringeth no excuse; she is welcome to God and man:
Her countenance is needful unto all who would prosper in either world;
And the mild light of her sweet face is mirrored in the eyes of her companions,
And straightway stand they accepted, children of penitence and love.[d]

Antonio Guevasa used to say, "That heaven would be filled with such as had done good works, and hell with such as intended to do them." A very suitable hint to those who put off their convictions to what they think will be a more convenient season.

10—12. (10) yet, although such constant and earnest warnings have been given. scant measure, lit. *a lean ephah*, Am. viii. 5. (11) bag . . weights, Pr. xvi. 11. (12) thereof, of her, *i.e.* the city of Jerusalem.

Treasures of wickedness (*vv.* 10, 11).—I. Resulting from short weights and defective measures. II. Adulterations of food, and manufacturing articles. III. Results of vulgar theft, fraud, etc. IV. Results of marriage for money without love. V. Results of conquests, national and personal loot, slave trade, etc. VI. The numerous ways in which riches are got, but not by right.

Treasures of wickedness.—

Yet direr were a class of murderers sage
Who dealt round poisons—not that they might speed

Quicker unto some wealthy heritage,
But, in a small way, daily fortune breed:
Adulterers of whate'er can feed
Mortals, or slake their thirst, perhaps the knife
Had more of mercy, in its ready deed
Of blood, than this destruction without strife,
Which charged with lingering death the pure well-heads of life.[a]

13—16. (13) **sick**, with a wasting, consuming sickness. (14) **casting down**, or hunger, emptiness. **take hold**, as if to supply your need, or to save you; but no self-efforts shall avail. (15) **sow**, *etc.*, comp. De. xxviii. 38, 40. (16) **statutes of Omri**, 1 Ki. xvi. 25, 26.

Sin, its encroaching nature.—When a sin is let in as a suppliant, it remains in as a tyrant. The Arabs have a fable of a miller who one day was startled by a camel's nose thrust in the window of the room where he was sleeping. "It is very cold outside," said the camel, "I only want to get my nose in." The nose was let in, then the neck, and finally the whole body. Presently the miller began to be extremely inconvenienced at the ungainly companion he had obtained in a room certainly not big enough for both. "If you are inconvenienced you may leave," said the camel; "as for myself, I shall stay where I am." There are many such camels knocking at the human heart. Take, for instance, compliance with a single worldly custom—dancing. First, the custom creeps humbly to the door of the heart, and says, "Let me in; what am I but putting one foot before another? certainly you do not object to music, and I would not for the world have a full band." So in comes the nose of the camel, and it is not long before the entire body follows. The Christian then finds his heart occupied in full figure by the very vice which a little while before peeped in so meekly. "Being up," it says to him, "all night at a ball, with the eyes dazzled by lights, and the ears stunned with a full band, interferes, you say, with your private devotions. So it does. But your private devotions will have to go, for I will not."[a]

some good; in this lion there is some honey to be found. 'It is good for me that I was afflicted' (Ps. cxix. 71). St. Augustine saith, 'Affliction is God's flail to thresh off our husks; not to consume but to refine.' There is no good in sin; it is the spirit and quintessence of evil. Sin is worse than hell; for the pains of hell only are a burden to the creature; but sin is a burden to God. 'I am pressed under your iniquities, as a cart is pressed under the sheaves' (Amos ii. 13)."—*T. Watson.*

"Public reformers had need first practise on their own hearts that which they purpose to try on others."—*Charles I.*

a Spurgeon.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1, 2. (1) **grapegleanings**, a complaint of the fewness of the Church's numbers.[a] **firstripe**, these were especially valued, and regarded as being of superior quality. (2) **good . . earth**, *comp.* Ps. xii. 1, xiv. 2; Is. lvii. 1.

First-ripe fruit.—The expression here made use of by the Prophet may probably be understood by the assistance of a remark which Sir John Chardin has made upon this passage. He informs us that the Persians and Turks are not only fond of almonds, plums, and melons in a mature state, but that they are remarkable for eating them before they are ripe. As soon as ever they approach to that state, they make use of them, the great dryness and temperature of the air preventing flatulencies.[b]

a "It is with me as with one seeking fruits after the harvest, grapes after the vintage. There is not a cluster to be found, no first-ripe fruit."—*Fausset.*

b Harmer.

3, 4. (3) **both hands**, indicating thorough earnestness and activity in their evil schemes. Lit. "Both hands are upon evil to make it good."[a] **warp it up**, twist their wicked schemes

a "The meaning is either, to do evil thoroughly,

or to do evil in such a way as to appear good, or in the very spirit of Satan, to make evil their good."—*Spk. Com.*

"We'll mock the time with fairest show; fair face must hide what the false heart does know."—*Shakespeare.*

[b] *Dr. Thomas.*

[c] *Roberts.*

together. (4) **brier . . thorn**, to such sinners are often compared, on account of their barrenness, and hurtful qualities. **watchmen**, *i.e.* the time when they report the swift-coming calamity.

Sin wrappings (*v.* 3).—The endeavour of people to wrap up sin is worthy of attention, because—I. It is general. The sinner seeks to wrap up sin—1. From society; 2. From his own conscience. II. Because it is wicked. Concealing sin is—1. A sin against society; 2. Against our constitution; 3. Against God. III. Because it is unwise. 1. The endeavour must prove inevitably fruitless; 2. It is eternally inimical to happiness; 3. If persisted in, will involve in unutterable ruin.[b]

Earnestness (*v.* 3).—We have seen that to do a thing with one hand, signifies earnestness and oneness of consent. Whenever a person has to receive a thing from a superior, he must put out both hands; for not to do so, would be a mark of great disrespect. "Alas! I went to that man with both hands (*i.e.* held them out to him), but he turned me away." "The greedy wretch eats with both hands," meaning, he is a glutton; because all respectable and decent people eat with the right hand only.[c]

5–7. (5) **trust . . guide**, bec. such is the prevailing selfishness and corruption that none can be trusted. (6) **son**, *etc.*, comp. Mat. x. 21, 35, 36.[a] (7) **unto the Lord**, away from frail and untrustworthy man.

[a] A state of unnatural lawlessness.

vv. 6–8. *T. Ashton*, 233.

v. 7. *J. Payne*, 138.

"You should be careful not to entrust another unnecessarily with a secret which it may be a hard matter for him to keep, and which may expose him to somebody's displeasure when it is hereafter discovered that he was the object of your confidence. Your desire for aid or for sympathy is not to be indulged by dragging other people into your misfortunes. There is as much responsibility in imparting your own secrets, as in keeping those of your neighbour."—*Darley.*

It is related that a disciple of Mohammed came to him one day, and said, "O prophet! my mother is dead: what is

The Friendship-flower.—

When first the Friendship-flower is planted
Within the garden of your soul,
Little of care or thought is wanted
To guard its beauty fresh and whole;
But when the one impassioned age
Has full revealed the magic bloom,
A wise and holy tutelage
Alone can shun the open tomb.

It is not Absence you should dread,—
For Absence is the very air
In which, if sound at root, the head
Shall wave most wonderful and fair;
With sympathies of joy and sorrow
Fed, as with morn and even dews,
Ideal colouring it may borrow
Richer than ever earthly hues.

But oft the plant, whose leaves unsere
Refresh the desert, hardly brooks
The common-peopled atmosphere
Of daily thoughts and words and looks;
It trembles at the brushing wings
Of many a careless fashion-fly,
And strange suspicions aim their stings
To taint it as they wanton by.

Rare is the heart to bear a flower,
That must not wholly fall and fade,
Where alien feelings, hour by hour,
Spring up, beset, and overshade;

Better, a child of care and toil,
To glorify some needy spot,
Than in a glad redundant soil
To pine, neglected and forgot.

Yet when, at last, by human slight,
Or close of their permitted day,
From the sweet world of life and light
Such fine creations lapse away,—
Bury the relics that retain
Sick odours of departed pride,—
Hoard as ye will your memory's gain,
But let them perish where they died.[b]

the best alms I can bestow for her good?" The prophet replied, "Water. Dig a well for her, and give water to the thirsty." The man did so, and said, "This well is for my mother."

b Blackwood.

8—10. (8) **mine enemy**, "the Antichrist, the imperial tyranny ever in antagonism with the true faithful Israel." Represented by Asshur, *v.* 12. **darkness**, *etc.*,[a] oftentimes the darkest time of the night is that wh. is just before the dawn. (9) **bear**, patiently and submissively. **plead**, *etc.*, Ps. xxxv. 1, xliii. 1. **righteousness**, here His gracious faithfulness to His promises. (10) **shame . . her**, "in seeing how utterly mistaken she was in supposing that I was utterly ruined." **where . . God?** Ps. xlii. 3—10. **as the mire**, into the Eastern streets the refuse of the houses is swept, and there trodden down.

a Ps. xxxvii. 24; Pr. xxiv. 16.

v. 8. *R. W. Dibain*, 187; *Bp. Ken*, 174; *Dr. J. Cockburn*, 446; *J. H. Newman*, iv. 107.

v. 9. *H. R. Roxby*, 309.

Worldly friendship.—

There is within the world in which we dwell
A friendship answering to that world full well;
An interchange of looks and actions kind,
And, in some sense, an intercourse of mind;
A useful commerce, a convenient trade,
By which both parties are the happier made:
And, when the thing is rightly understood
And justly valued, it is wise and good.

I speak not here of friendships that excite
In boys at school such wonder and delight,
Of high heroic friends, in serious strife,
Contending which should yield a forfeit life—
Such wondrous love, in their maturer days,
Men, if they credit, are content to praise.

I speak not here of friendships true and just,
When friend can friend with life and honour trust;
Where mind to mind has long familiar grown,
And every failing, every virtue known.
Of these I speak not; things so rich and rare
That we degrade with jewels to compare,
Or bullion pure and massy. I intend
To treat of one whose neighbour called him friend,
Or called him neighbour; and with reason good—
The friendship rising from the neighbourhood.
A sober kind, in common service known;
Not such as is in death and peril shown;
Such as will give or ask a helping hand,
But no important sacrifice demand;
In fact, a friendship that will long abide,
If seldom rashly, never strongly, tried.

"Dost thou know what friendship is? 'Tis not the fawning cringe, the studied smile, the oil-smooth speech, big word, or solemn vow; it is a sacred ray of heav'nly love: like that, rejoicing in the good of others, it scorns the narrow bounds of selfishness, and knows no bliss sincere, but social joy: simple and plain, it shines in naked truth, and opens all the sluices of the heart."—*Hawkins.*

Mr. Finney tells of a blacksmith whose agony became so great at thought of the condition of the Church and of sinners, that he could not work; so locked up his shop, and spent the afternoon in prayer. This was followed by a powerful revival.

Yes! these are sober friendships, made for use;
And much convenience they in life produce.
Like a good coat, that keeps us from the cold,
The cloth of frieze is not a cloth of gold;
But neither is it piebald, pieced, and poor,—
'Tis a good useful coat, and nothing more.[b]

b *Crabbe.*

11—13. (11) **day .. removed**, a difficult *v.*; better rend. "A day for building thy walls is at hand. That day shall the law of separation be utterly removed."[a] The word trans. *walls* is better, *fence* of a vineyard, or plantation. (12) **he shall come**, or *they* shall come; prob. meaning that from all districts the dispersed of Israel should come to Zion.[b] (13) **land**, or *earth*, as opposed to the kingdom of heaven, the Church of God. Some think the ref. is to the intervening period of desolation for Palestine before the restoration from the captivity.

Earnestness of a convinced sinner.—If a man knew that the ship in which he and his family were sailing, and which contained all his property, was leaking day and night, do you suppose he would be careless about it? Would he not be constantly baling out the water lest it should sink the vessel with its precious freight? If a man understood that a spark from the flue of the furnace had set fire to the timber of his dwelling, and that, smothered, it was creeping along and charring the wainscoting and partition, do you suppose he would content himself merely with saying, "I have no doubt that this house is on fire, and that it is dangerous?" Would he not do something? Many men read the Bible, and say, "My dear children, we are all sinful; we are sold in sin: may God lead us out of our sinfulness, and draw us toward Him!" and yet they put forth no effort to reform their lives. Meanwhile their sinfulness increases, and envelops them, and consumes them. Thousands and thousands of men have died in that way, and been utterly destroyed. If a man is wise, no sooner does he have the slightest intimation that there is fire threatening the destruction of his house and all that are in it, than he calls for men, and sets them to work to put an end to the mischief. And when a man is touched by the Spirit of God, and he is made conscious that the fires of hell are in him, with what earnestness does he enter upon a course of repentance! How does he say, "God have mercy on me! Help me; teach me; lead me!"[c]

a *Spk. Com.*

b "In a spiritual sense this began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when multitudes from Assyria and Egypt were received by the Apostles into the Church of Christ."—*Wordsworth.*

"There are two sorts of hypocrites: one that are deceived with their outward morality and external religion; and the other are those that are deceived with false discoveries and elevations; which often cry down works, and men's own righteousness, and talk much of free grace; but at the same time make a righteousness of their discoveries, and of their humiliation, and exalt themselves to heaven with them."—*Edwards.*

c *H. W. Beecher.*

14, 15. (14) **feed**, as before, in the sense of a shepherd's ordering, providing, and ruling. **rod**, the shepherd's staff or crook. **solitarily**, or apart from the enemies. **Bashan and Gilead**,[a] districts noted for their rich pastures: and put as "typical of the abode for wh. the Lord's people are yearning." (15) **days .. Egypt**, this Divine deliverance is constantly referred to as altogether a model deliverance.[b]

Wonder.—Coleridge says that "in wonder all philosophy began, in wonder it ends, and admiration fills up the interspace; but the first wonder is the offspring of ignorance, and the last is the parent of devotion." There is great inconsistency in man's wonder. He will sometimes wonder at the works of man, but not at the works of God. How often does an archway of more than the ordinary span and beauty excite his "wonder;" while the arch of the heavens with a span measureless and a beauty

a "The expressions denote that the Jews shall enjoy full and free possession of their land after their return to it, with the same security and happiness with which they possessed it in their most flourishing state, under the reigns of David and Solomon."—*Lowth.*

b Ps. lxxviii. 12,

Divine is looked upon with cold indifference. A piece of human mechanism calls forth his "wonder," while the marvellous structure of his own body is seldom or ever contemplated with interest. Some people have an obvious habit of wondering at almost everything they see and hear. The most commonplace tale, the veriest small talk, the things that are palpably plain at the first view, excite "wonder." False wonder ends with the utterance of words, but true wonder incites to study and research to explain away the reason of the wonder by making things plain to the understanding.[c]

16, 17. (16) **see**, God's deliverance. **their might**, wh. they shall feel bears no comparison with God's.[a] **ears . . deaf**, wilfully closed, bec. they do not like to hear of Israel's successes. (17) **lick . . serpent**, Ge. iii. 14; Ps. lxxii. 9. **worms**, or creeping things: afraid to stir out of their lurking holes.

Hearers.—1. The inattentive hearer that taketh very little heed to what he heareth; 2. The inconsiderate hearer, that never ponders what he hears, nor compares one thing with another; 3. The injudicious hearer, that never makes any judgment, whether it be true or false; 4. The unapprehensive hearer, who hears all his days, but is never the wiser; 5. The stupid unaffected hearer, that is as a rock and a stone under the Word; 6. There are your prejudiced, disaffected hearers, who hear with dislike, especially those things which relate to practice; 7. Your fantastical, voluptuous hearers, that hear only to please their fancy or imaginations: they come on purpose to try if they can hear a pretty sentence, any fine jingle, any flashes of wit; 8. Your notional hearers, that are of somewhat a higher form and sect than the others: they always come to learn some kind of novelty; 9. Those talkative persons, who only come to hear, that they may furnish themselves with notions for the sake of discourse; 10. The censorious and critical hearers, who come on purpose not as doers of the law, but as judges; 11. Malicious hearers, that come on purpose to seek an advantage against those they come to hear, particularly from what they preach. Thus you see the characters of those who are "hearers only," which are various and manifold.[b]

18—20. (18) **who**, *etc.*, Ex. xv. 11. **pardoneth**, *etc.*, Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. (19) **cast . . sea**, Ps. ciii. 12. "Buried out of sight in eternal oblivion." (20) **perform**, carry into full effect.[a] **truth**, or sure promise. **mercy**, or gracious promise.[b]

Divine mercy (*v.* 18).—I. The greatness of God's mercy as it is manifested in the Gospel. 1. He pardons; 2. He passes over; 3. He retaineth not His anger; 4. He delights. II. The exercise of God's mercy toward penitent believers. 1. He turns again; 2. He will have compassion: 3. He will subdue; 4. He will cast into the sea. III. The confirmation of God's mercy derived from the covenant of grace. 1. The relation between the Abrahamic covenant and the covenant of grace; 2. The harmony of mercy with truth in the covenant of grace.

Abundant pardon (*v.* 19).—It is His promise not only to pardon ordinary sins, but those also which be as scarlet, and red like crimson. It is His free compassion to cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Now, the sea, by reason of his vastness, can drown as well mountains as mole-hills: the boundless ocean of

13; Je. xvi. 14, 15.

v. 14. *Dr. J. Owen*, xvi. 369.

c John Bate.

a "Once they had eagerly drunk in all rumours as so many messages of victories, but then they shall be afraid of hearing them, because they continually fear new disasters, when they see the God of Israel to be so powerful."—*Calvin.*

"Two aged women of a village where John Foster preached gratuitously, are said to have given the following contrasted judgments of his sermons—one setting him down for a 'perfect fool,' the other 'longing to hear that good man all the winter.'"—*J. Sheppard.*

b Howe.

a Comp. Ge. xii. 2, xxvi. 24, xxviii. 13.

"The unchangeable promise implied an engagement that the seed of the patriarchs should never perish, and should be restored to their inheritance as often as they turned wholly to God."—*Fausset.*

b Lu. i. 70—74.

"There is no prophetic denunciation against Israel which is not concluded with promise of

mercy." — *J. Abarbinel.*
v. 18. *T. Manton*, iii. 2, 97; *A. Roberts*, i. 35; *Bp. Wilson*, 123.
v. 19. *Dr. H. Draper*, iii. 311.
v. 20. *J. Randall*, 182.
c *Bolton.* "Go to the prisoner in his cell under sentence of death; show him the royal mandate proclaiming his pardon, properly signed and sealed; knock off his galling fetters; open his prison doors, and introduce him once more to the forfeited sunshine of heaven. What transports of rapture would thrill through his heart, when, in the consciousness of pardon, he rejoiced in the light of liberty! But how much greater cause of joy has the pardoned sinner, called out of darkness into marvellous light, renovated by the Holy Spirit, and fitted for the joys of heaven!"— *W. J. Brock.*

God's mercies can swallow up our mightiest sins much more. It is His merciful power to blot out our sins as a cloud. Now, the strength of the summer's sun is able to scatter the thickest fog, as well as the thinnest mist—nay, to drive away the darkest midnight; the irresistible heat of God's free love shining through the Sun of Righteousness upon a penitent soul, to dissolve to nothing the desperatest work of darkness, and most horrible sin, far more easily. But this mystery of mercy and miracle of God's free love is a jewel only for truly humbled souls. Let no stranger to the life of godliness meddle with it. Let no swine trample it under his feet.[c]

Pardon of sin.—

Darkness, the world, the flesh, spiritual sin,
With such infectious stains thy soul defile,
No earthly spring can wash thy conscience clean,
The streams of Ganges, or the floods of Nile.
The secret source of what in thee is vile
Heaven's grace alone can fitly purge away;
Turn to thy Saviour then, in lowly style,
Ask for forgiveness, all thy sins display,
Cling to the Cross in faith, weep, tremble, praise and pray.

Pardon for sins.—

Thus to the angry gods, offending mortals,
Made sensible by some severe affliction,
How all their crimes are register'd in heaven;
In that nice court, how no rash word escapes,
But e'en extravagant thoughts are all set down;
Thus the poor penitents with fear approach
The reverend shrines, and thus for mercy bow;
Thus melting, too, they wash the hallow'd earth,
And groan to be forgiven.

NAHUM.

Introduction.

I. Author. NAHUM, = "*consolation.*" The Elkoshite, born, as some think, at Elkosh in Galilee ; or as others believe, at the Assyrian Elkosh, on the east of the Tigris, and near Nineveh. In the latter case, Nahum must have been one of the children of the captivity. The former is most probably the correct view. Henderson produces several passages in which phrases occur similar to those in Isaiah, and hence infers that Nahum being contemporary with Isaiah must have lived near him, and have borrowed from his writings. **II. Time.** B.C. 720—698. **III. Style.** Nahum's composition must be placed high among those of the Minor Prophets. He evinces great poetic power, his language is pure, his images beautifully appropriate. **IV. Theme.** Rightly to understand Nahum, compare it with Jonah, of which it is a continuation and supplement. The two prophecies form connected parts of the same moral history ; the remission of God's judgments being illustrated in Jonah, and the execution of them in Nahum. The devoted city had one denunciation more given a few years later, by Zephaniah (ii. 13), and shortly afterwards—B.C. 606—the whole were fulfilled.—*Angus.*

Synopsis.

(According to Horne.)

One entire poem, which, opening with a sublime description of the justice and power of God, tempered by long-suffering and goodness ..... i. 1—8

Foretells the destruction of Sennacherib's forces and the subversion of the Assyrian Empire ..... 9—12

Together with the deliverance of Hezekiah and the death of Sennacherib ..... 13—15

The destruction of Nineveh is then predicted, and described with singular minuteness ii.—iii.

Nineveh, the destruction of which was foretold by the Prophet, was at that time the capital of a great and flourishing empire. It was a city of vast extent and population ; and was the centre of the principal commerce of the world. Its wealth, however, was not altogether derived from trade. It was a "bloody city," "full of lies and robbery" (iii. 1). It plundered the neighbouring nations ; and is compared by the Prophet to a family of lions, which "fill their holes with prey and their dens with ravin" (ii. 11, 12). At the same time it was strongly fortified ; its colossal walls, a hundred feet high, with their fifteen hundred towers, bidding defiance to all enemies. Yet so totally was it destroyed, that, in the second century after Christ, not a vestige remained of it, and its very site was long a matter of uncertainty.—*Angus.*

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) **burden**, or prophetic doom. **Nineveh**, see the earlier mission of Jonah to this city.[a] **Nahum**, meaning, *consolation*. A Prophet not otherwise known. **Elkoshite**, poss. a village in Galilee.[b] (2) **jealous**, Ex. xx. 5. **revengeth**, better, *avengeth*. **furious**, better, "He that hath fury."[c] **reserveth . . enemies**, holdeth it till His own appointed times. (3) **slow to anger**, Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. **way . . feet**, *comp.* Ps. xviii. 7, xcvii. 2. "Large as the clouds are He treads on them, as a man would on the small dust."

God's forbearance (*v.* 3).—It seems as if the Prophet meant, God is slow to anger because He is great in power. This leads us to think of—I. His exquisite sensibility. II. His abhorrence of sin. III. His provocation by the world. IV. His right to do whatever He pleases.[d]

Nineveh.—To a brief record of the creation of the antediluvian world, and of the dispersion and the different settlements of mankind after the deluge, the Scriptures of the Old Testament add a full and particular history of the Hebrews for the space of fifteen hundred years, from the days of Abraham to the era of the last of the Prophets. While the historical part of Scripture thus traces, from its origin, the history of the world, the prophecies give a prospective view which reaches to its end. And it is remarkable that profane history, emerging from fable, becomes clear and authentic about the very period when sacred history terminates, and when the fulfilment of these prophecies commences, which refer to other nations besides the Jews. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was for a long time an extensive and populous city. Its walls are said, by heathen historians, to have been a hundred feet in height, sixty miles in compass, and to have been defended by fifteen hundred towers, each two hundred feet high. Although it formed the subject of some of the earliest of the prophecies, and was the very first which met its predicted fate, yet a heathen historian, in describing its capture and destruction, repeatedly refers to an ancient prediction respecting it. Diodorus Siculus relates that the king of Assyria, after the complete discomfiture of his army, confided in an old prophecy that Nineveh would not be taken unless the river should become the enemy of the city; that after an ineffectual siege of two years, the river, swollen with long-continued and tempestuous torrents, inundated part of the city, and threw down the wall for the space of twenty furlongs; and that the king, deeming the prediction accomplished, despaired of his safety, and erected an immense funeral pile, on which he heaped his wealth, and with which himself, his household, and palace, were consumed. The book of Nahum was avowedly prophetic of the destruction of Nineveh: and it is there foretold, "that the gates of the river shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved." "Nineveh of old, like a pool of water—with an overflowing flood He will make an utter end of the place thereof." The historian describes the facts by which the other predictions of the Prophet were as literally fulfilled. He relates that the king of Assyria, elated with his former victories, and ignorant

a Dr. Prideaux places the taking of Nineveh in the twenty-ninth year of king Josiah.

b "According to S. Jerome, El-Kosh was a village in Galilee, and his tomb was shown at *Bethogabra* near Emmaus. But as his prophecies were written after the captivity of the ten tribes, the tradition which points to his death in an Assyrian village may have some probability. Layard visited a village called Alkosh, which contains a so-called tomb of Nahum." — *Bib. Things.*

c "One who, if He pleases, can most readily give effect to His fury."—*Grotius.*

v. 1. *F. D. Maurice, Kings and Pro.* 342.

v. 3. *S. Charnock*, iii. 414; *L. Atterbury*, i. 247; *A. Shanks*, 385; *Dr. G. Croft*, ii. 184.

d Dr. Thomas.

"There never was a saint yet that grew proud of his fine feathers, but what the Lord plucked them out by-and-by; there never yet was an angel that had pride in his heart, but he lost his wings, and fell into Gehenna, as Satan and those

of the revolt of the Bactrians, had abandoned himself to scandalous inaction; had appointed a time of festivity, and supplied his soldiers with abundance of wine; and that the general of the enemy, apprised by deserters of their negligence and drunkenness, attacked the Assyrian army while the whole of them were fearlessly giving way to indulgence, destroyed a great part of them, and drove the rest into the city. The words of the Prophet were hereby verified: "While they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble full dry." The Prophet promised much spoil to the enemy: "Take the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold; for there is no end of the store and glory out of all the pleasant furniture." And the historian affirms that many talents of gold and silver, preserved from the fire, were carried to Ecbatana. According to Nahum, the city was not only to be destroyed by an overflowing flood, but the fire also was to devour it; and, as Diodorus relates, partly by water, partly by fire, it was destroyed.[e]

4—6. (4) **rebuketh the sea,** Ex. xiv. 21. **Bashan,** *etc.*, comp. Am. i. 2, iv. 1. **Lebanon,** *see* Is. xxxiii. 9.[a] (5) **is burned,** or is heaved; lifts itself up, as with earthquake. (6) **poured . . fire,** as in a volcanic eruption. **rocks . . down,**[b] **or burst asunder.** Referring to the great convulsions of nature.

The anger and the goodness (*vv.* 6, 7).—I. Jehovah's anger—1. Righteous; 2. Terrible; 3. Real; 4. Inexorable. II. Jehovah's goodness—1. Sincere; 2. Powerful; 3. Watchful; 4. Unchanging. Improvement:—(1) In the great day of His wrath who shall be able to stand? (2) He is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.[c]

Nineveh.—The utter and perpetual destruction and desolation of Nineveh were foretold: "The Lord will make an utter end of the place thereof. Affliction shall not rise up the second time. She is empty, void, and waste. The Lord will stretch out His hand against the north, and destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. How is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in!" In the second century, Lucian, a native of a city on the banks of the Euphrates, testified that Nineveh was utterly perished; that there was no vestige of it remaining; and that none could tell where once it was situated. This testimony of Lucian, and the lapse of many ages during which the place was not known where it stood, render it at least somewhat doubtful whether the remains of an ancient city, opposite to Mosul, which have been described as such by travellers, be indeed those of ancient Nineveh. It is, perhaps, probable that they are the remains of the city which succeeded Nineveh, or of a Persian city of the same name, which was built on the banks of the Tigris by the Persians subsequently to the year 230 of the Christian era, and demolished by the Saracens in 632. In contrasting the then existing great and increasing population, and the accumulating wealth of the proud inhabitants of the mighty Nineveh, with the utter ruin that awaited it,—the word of God (before whom all the inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers) by Nahum was—"Make thyself many as the canker-worm, make thyself many as the locusts. Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above

fallen angels did; and there shall never be a saint who indulges self-conceit and pride and self-confidence, but the Lord will spoil his glories, and trample his honours in the mire, and make him cry out yet again, Lord, have mercy upon me, less than the least of all saints, and the 'very chief of sinners.'" — *Spurgeon.*

e Keith.

a "There is not thing in the world so blooming that God cannot change it when He is wroth."—*Fausset.*

b "As Hannibal burst asunder the Alpine rocks by fire to make a passage for his army."—*Grotius.*

c Dr. H. Bonar.

"The developments of pride are numerous and often unsuspected as to their real character. The love of dress and display; the undue deference to the opinions of others, which leads us to adopt forms of speech and modes of action foreign to our usages; the man-fearing spirit which imposes silence in reference to our religion in social circles, and particularly the sentiment which ignores all physical manifestations in connection with religious experience—these are all the offshoots of the one great principle—pride of heart."—*S. H. Platt.*

the stars of heaven: the canker-worm spoileth, and flieth away. Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day: but when the sun riseth, they flee away; and their place is not known where they are," or were. Whether these words imply that even the site of Nineveh would in future ages be uncertain or unknown; or, as they rather seem to intimate, that every vestige of the palaces of its monarchs, of the greatest of its nobles, and of the wealth of its numerous merchants, would wholly disappear; the truth of the prediction cannot be invalidated under either interpretation. The avowed ignorance respecting Nineveh, and the oblivion which passed over it, for many an age, conjoined with the meagreness of evidence to identify it, still prove that the place was long unknown where it stood, and that, even now, it can scarcely with certainty be determined. And if the only spot that bears its name, or that can be said to be the place where it was, be indeed the site of one of the most extensive of cities on which the sun ever shone, and which continued for many centuries to be the capital of Assyria—the "principal mounds," few in number, which "show neither bricks, stones, nor other materials of building, but are in many places overgrown with grass, and resemble the mounds left by intrenchments and fortifications of ancient Roman camps," and the appearances of other mounds and ruins less marked than even these, extending for ten miles, and widely spread, and seeming to be "the wreck of former buildings," show that Nineveh is left without one monument of royalty, without any token whatever of its splendour or wealth; that their place is not known where they were; and that it is indeed a desolation—"empty, void, and waste," its very ruins perished, and less than the wreck of what it was. "Such an utter ruin," in every view, "has been made of it; and such is the truth of the Divine predictions."[d]

"What if a body might have all the pleasures in the world for asking? Who would so unman himself as, by accepting them, to desert his soul, and become a perpetual slave to his senses?"—*Seneca.*

"As the rivers of fresh water run their course with a hasty current to fall in the salt sea, so the posting sun of all worldly pleasures, after a short gleam and vain glistering, sets in the ocean of endless sorrow."—*Bolton.*

"Though sages may pour out their wisdom's treasure, there is no sterner moralist than pleasure."—*Byron.*

d Keith.

7—10. (7) **good**, in the sense of being gracious and long-suffering. **stronghold**, Pr. xviii. 10. **knoweth**, so as to *care for*.[a] (8) **flood**, the frequent fig. for Divine judgments. **the place**, or her place; *i.e.* Nineveh.[b] (9) **affliction**, or the stroke. It should be so complete as to need no renewal. Once should suffice. (10) **folden . . thorns**, wh. bundled together may seem to make an impregnable hedge. **devoured**, by fire.[c]

Darkness pursuing sinners (*v.* 8).—I. A sinner is an enemy to God. 1. He hates God; 2. He tries to injure God; 3. He tries to make away with God. II. God means to deal with these His enemies. 1. There is darkness in store for them; 2. This darkness is from God; 3. This darkness shall pursue them; 4. Every enemy of God must expect this.[d]

Nineveh.—Nineveh affords another example of a remarkable prophecy and its fulfilment. Consider what is well known of the history, condition, and character of this "exceeding great city," and then compare the following prophecies with its present state (Nah. i. 8, 10, ii. 6—9, iii. 13—17; Zeph. ii. 13—15), and remember that Zephaniah wrote one hundred years after Nahum, and fifty years before the event he predicted, when as yet there were no signs of decay in that empire city of the East. "The account of the Prophet," says Dr. Angus, "when compared with the narrative of the historian (Diodorus Siculus), reads more like history than prophecy. Lucian, who flourished in

a Ps. i. 6; 2 Ti. ii. 19.

b "The populous imperial city should become a perpetual desolation, according to the vivid prediction of another prophet. Zeph. ii. 13, 14, 15."—*Spk. Com.*

c "These thorns, esp. the kind called *bellan*, wh. covers the whole country, and is that wh. is thus burned, to clear the ground, are so folden together as to be utterly inseparable, and being united by thousands of small intertwining branches, when the torch is applied they flash and flame in-

stantly like stubble fully dry."—*Thomson.*
v. 7. *J. Milner*, ii. 47; *E. Cooper*, v. 50.
d Dr. H. Bonar.
e Dr. Thompson.

200 A.D., and was a native of that region, affirms that it had utterly perished, and there was no footstep of it remaining. For many years the very site of it was unknown, and only latterly have the researches of Layard and Botta made the frequenters of some European museums familiar with a few of the relics of this vast metropolis of ancient Assyria, exhumed from "an extended waste, interspersed sparingly with heaps of rubbish."[e]

11—15. (11) **one . . thee**, either Sennacherib or Rabshakeh.[a] **wicked counsellor**, *Heb.* "a counsellor of Beliah." (12) **quiet**, in their confidence of easily overrunning the land of Judæa, and seizing Jerusalem. **cut down**, Is. xvii. 12—14. **no more**, by the hand of the Assyrian. (13) **break . . sunder**, *comp.* Ge. xxvii. 40; Le. xxvi. 13; Is. x. 27. Poss. Hezekiah had become tributary to Sennacherib, his overthrow was Hezekiah's deliverance. (14) **concerning thee**, *i.e.* Sennacherib. None of his family were to succeed him. **make thy grave**, or there, in the house of thy idol, thy grave.[b] (15) **mountains**, *etc.*, comp. Is. lii. 7. Here the language expresses the general rejoicing, and sense of safety, after the overthrow of Sennacherib's army. **keep . . feasts**, this they could not do while the enemy was in the land. **no more**, never again; for the Aperian empire was soon after destroyed.

A preacher of good tidings.—The tidings which this glorious person published, are tidings brought to rebels against their Saviour and their God. They are tidings to prodigals and outcasts, who were destined to wander for ever, who had no place of rest where they might lay their heads. They are tidings from heaven, the world of peace, of hope, and of joy. They are tidings from God,—the parent, the Saviour,—whom they had offended, and to whom it was their infinite interest to be reunited. They are tidings of renewed holiness, to beings given over to endless sin; of peace and reconciliation, to beings consigned to eternal alienation; and of eternal life, to beings sentenced to die for ever.[c]

a Is. xxxvi. 14—20.

b "This was fulfilled in the murder of Sennacherib, in the house of Nisroch his god, by the hand of his own sons. 2 Ki. xix. 37." — *Wordsworth.*

"The roses of pleasure seldom last long enough to adorn the brow of him who plucks them, and they are the only roses which do not retain their sweetness after they have lost their beauty."—*Blair.*

c *Dr. Dwight.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1, 2. (1) **dasheth in pieces**, or the *scatterer;* a poetical name for the besieger, who should destroy the kingdom of Assyria, whose capital was Nineveh.[a] **keep**, *etc.*, do all you can, in your self-confidence: you will need it all, and yet all will be in vain. The advice is *ironical.* (2) **turned away**, prob. meaning, "The Lord hath returned upon Assyria His pride against Jacob." **emptiers**, or Assyrian spoilers. **vine branches**, Ps. lxxx. 8—16.[b]

Example of the watchcare of God.—David Zeisberger was travelling with several Christian Indians. They went to sleep, one night, in a room where several barrels of gunpowder were stored, grains of which were scattered about the floor. The host urged them not to take a candle into the room, but yielded, on a promise of the utmost caution. The missionaries went to sleep. A traveller who had the candle in special charge forgot to extinguish it. In the morning, Zeisberger called out one of his brethren, and said, "Had we not had the eye of Him upon us who never slumbereth nor sleepeth, we should all have been this

a Lit. "The hammer is come up against thee." See Je. i. 23.

b Reference is to the evils inflicted on Sennacherib's first invasion of Palestine.

"Pleasure must first have the warrant that it is without sin; and then the measure that it is without excess."—*Adams.*

night precipitated into eternity. I slept soundly, being extremely fatigued, and was in my first sleep, when I felt as if some one roused me. I sat up, and saw the wick of the candle hanging down on one side, in a flame, and on the point of falling into the straw, which I was just in time to prevent. I could not fall asleep again, but lay awake silently thanking the Lord for the extraordinary preservation we had experienced."

"Pleasure soon exhausts us and itself also; but endeavour never does."—*Richter.*

3—5. (3) **made red**, in the Nineveh monuments, the shields and dresses of the warriors are generally painted red.[a] **in scarlet**, the Oriental military cloak. **flaming torches**, or flashings, as of steel.[b] Referring to the flashing light, and burning sparks, from the swiftly driven chariots. **fir trees**, or spears made of fir wood. (4) **rage**, or be driven furiously. **justle**,[c] or run to and fro. (5) **worthies**, marg. *gallants*, nobles. **they . . wall**, the Ninevites, hurrying to the wall, shall see the towers for the rams, and other preparations for the siege.[d]

A martial bearing.—According to the *Delhi Gazette*, a constable at Jubbulpore, in giving evidence before a magistrate the other day, gave a clear definition of his idea of a "martial bearing," which is probably not inaccurate as regards many of our soldiers in that country. The constable, having apprehended some men as deserters, was asked by the magistrate, "What led you to suppose that they were deserters?" "Their martial bearing," replied the constable. "What," inquired the magistrate, "do you mean by their martial bearing?" "They were very free," said the constable, "with their money, were drunk, swore a great deal, and wanted to fight." "And that," rejoined the magistrate, "is your definition of martial bearing?" "Yes, sir," was the reply.

a "The ancients dyed their bull's-hide shields red, partly to strike terror into the enemy, chiefly lest the blood from wounds wh. they might receive should be perceived and give confidence to him."—*Calvin.*

b Fuerst.

c Or *jostle*, French, *jouster*, *jouter*, from *jouste*, a tilt. To run or strike against.

d Some apply this *v.* to the anxious efforts made by the defenders of the city.

6, 7. (6) **rivers**, the streams and canals fed by the Tigris. As these led into the city, their seizure was of the utmost advantage to the enemy. **dissolved**, with fear and terror. (7) **Huzzab**, the word means a "strong and impregnable fortress," and is prob. a poetical name for Nineveh. But some trans. the word and the sentence thus, "It is determined," etc. **led captive**, Is. xlvii. 2, 3. **maids . . doves**, or "with dove-like plaints."[a] **tabering**, beating on their breasts, as sign of distress and grief.

The crystal palace (*v.* 6).—I. The palace. 1. Called the crystal palace, made of glass, describe; 2. Had a royal origin, but there is a building of God. II. What is to become of it? It shall be dissolved, so shall we all, and what then?[b]

a Is. xxxviii. 14, lix. 11.

b J. East, M.A.

Arab princesses.—When D'Arvieux was in the camp of the great emir, his princess was visited by other Arab princesses. The last that came, whose visit alone he describes, was mounted, he says, on a camel, covered with a carpet, and decked with flowers; a dozen women marched in a row before her, holding the camel's halter with one hand; they sung the praises of their mistress, and songs which expressed joy, and the happiness of being in the service of such a beautiful and amiable lady. Those who went first, and were more distinct from her person, came in their turn to the head of the camel, and took hold of the halter, which place, as being the post of honour, they quitted to others, when the princess had gone a few paces. The emir's wife sent her women to meet her, to whom the halter was

"In the depraved nature of man, pride is the radical reigning sin that first lives and last dies. . . . . A man may visibly despise the pomp and vanities of the world, and this may raise his esteem in the minds of real saints; and the outward practice of goodness will be productive of the praise of goodness in others; this will afford a strong temptation of pride. All the operations of virtues, even the exercise of humility, that are the matter and

argument of praise, may be incentives of pride; and those diseases are extremely dangerous which are nourished by that food that is necessary to support life."—*Dr. Bates.*

c Harmer.

a Re. xvii. 1, 15.

b "The enemy may easily plunder the city of all its riches and costly furniture, for there is none to make any resistance." —*Lowth.*

c Mason.

"There is scarce any one thing whereof men and women are more proud (at least wherein and whereby they show their pride more) than apparel; though, indeed, there's no one thing (sin itself excepted) that we have more cause to be ashamed of than our apparel, for they tell us that we are sinners; Adam and his wife (in their innocence) were naked, and were not ashamed. Our ornaments are but badges of our sin and shame; and 'tis to this purpose observable, that the same word in Hebrew which signifies a garment, signifies treachery and prevarication, to show that we have committed treason against God, else there had not been need of a fig-leaf

entirely quitted, out of respect, her own women putting themseves behind the camel. In this order they marched to the tent, where they alighted. They then all sung together the beauty, birth, and good qualities of this princess. This account illustrates those words of the Prophet wherein he speaks of the presenting of the queen of Nineveh, or Nineveh itself, under the figure of a queen, to her conqueror. He describes her as led by the maids, with the voice of doves, that is, with the voice of mourning; their usual songs of joy, with which they used to lead her along, as the Arab women did their princess, being turned into lamentations.[c]

8—10. (8) **like a pool, or as a city well watered.** The river and streams formed part of her defence and confidence. Or, the city may be compared to a pool on account of the multitude of her inhabitants.[a] **flee away,** their numbers not availing to preserve them. **stand,** the unheeded voice of those who would rally the fugitives. (9) **take ye,** addressed to the victors. **pleasant furniture,** costly and luxurious things.[b] (10) **heart,** *etc.*, Is. xiii. 7, 8. **faces . . blackness,** Joel ii. 6.

Superstitious awe.—

This is the secret centre of the isle;
Here, Romans, pause, and let the eye of wonder
Gaze on the solemn scene; behold yon oak,
How stern he frowns, and with his broad brown arms
Chills the pale plain beneath him: mark yon altar,
The dark stream brawling round its rugged base;
These cliffs, these yawning caverns, this wide circus,
Skirted with unhewn stone: they awe my soul,
As if the very genius of the place
Himself appear'd, and with terrific tread
Stalk'd through his drear domain. And yet, my friends
(If shapes like his be but the fancy's coinage),
Surely there is a hidden power that reigns
'Mid the lone majesty of untamed nature,
Controlling sober reason; tell me else,
Why do these haunts of barb'rous superstition
O'ercome me thus? I scorn them, yet they awe me.[c]

11—13. (11) **where,** *etc.*, the exclamation of surprise at the desolation of this famous city. **lions,** here used as emblems of majesty and strength. (12) **lion . . ravin,** fig. description of the way in wh. Nineveh had plundered the nations she subdued. (13) **against thee,** to bring upon thee the overwhelming judgments wh. their iniquity had so long called down. **messengers,** perhaps with allusion to such mockers as Rabshakeh.

Nineveh.—"It was early in the evening when the pointed turrets of the city of Mosul opened on our view, and communicated no very unpleasant sensations to my heart. I found myself on Scripture-ground, and could not help feeling some portion of the pride of the traveller, when I reflected that I was now within sight of Nineveh, renowned in holy writ. The city is seated in a very barren sandy plain, on the banks of the river Tigris, embellished with the united gifts of Pomona, Ceres, and Flora. The external view of the town is much in its favour, being encompassed with stately walls of solid stone, over which the steeples or minarets, and other lofty buildings, are seen with

increased effect. Here I saw a caravan encamped, halting on its march from the Gulf of Persia to Armenia ; and it certainly made a most noble appearance, filling the eye with a multitude of grand objects, all uniting to form one magnificent whole. But though the outside be so beautiful, the inside is most detestable : the heat is so intense that in the middle of the day there is no stirring out, and even at night the walls of the houses are so heated by the day's sun as to produce a disagreeable heat to the body, at a foot, or even a yard distance from them. However, I entered it with spirits, because I considered it as the last stage of the worst part of my pilgrimage. But, alas! I was disappointed in my expectation ; for the Tigris was dried up by the intensity of the heat, and an unusual long drought, and I was obliged to take the matter with a patient shrug, and accommodate my mind to a journey on horseback, which, though not so long as that I had already made, was likely to be equally dangerous ; and which, therefore, demanded a full exertion of fortitude and resolution. It was still the hot season of the year, and we were to travel through that country over which the horrid wind I have before mentioned sweeps its consuming blasts : it is called by the Turks *samiel*, is mentioned by holy Job under the name of the east wind, and extends its ravages all the way from the extreme end of the Gulf of Cambaya up to Mosul ; it carries along with it fleaks of fire, like threads of silk ; instantly strikes dead those that breathe it, and consumes them inwardly to ashes ; the flesh soon becoming black as a coal, and dropping off the bones. Philosophers consider it as a kind of electric fire, proceeding from the sulphureous or nitrous exhalations which are kindled by the agitation of the winds. The only possible means of escape from its fatal effects is to fall flat on the ground, and thereby prevent the drawing it in : to do this, however, it is necessary first to see it, which is not always practicable. Besides this, the ordinary heat of the climate is extremely dangerous to the blood and lungs, and even to the skin, which it blisters and peels from the flesh, affecting the eyes so much that travellers are obliged to wear a transparent covering over them to keep the heat off."

apron to cover our nakedness. Who now can be proud of being a sinner? Who can find in his heart to be proud of that which tells him that he hath lost his innocence? Surely he that hath sinned himself into shame should be ashamed of his sin ; and though it be a shame and a sin to go naked, yet when we are clothed with our garments, we should be clothed with shame as with a garment." —*Fenning.*

The Roman soldiers at the sacking of Jerusalem entered the temple, and went into the sanctum sanctorum ; but seeing no images there, as they used to have in their own idolatrous temples, gave out, in a jeer, that the Jews worshipped the clouds. So the worldling can see no pleasure in religion.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—6. (1) **bloody city,** *comp.* 2 Sa. xvi. 7, xxi. 1. In the great Eastern cities life was little valued, and crimes of violence abounded.[a] **prey departeth not,** she ceases not to plunder. (2) **noise . . chariots,** this is what the Prophet sees in his vision. The figures describe the vigour of the enemies' attack. (3) **horseman,** or horse-soldier.[b] (4) **because,** *etc.*,[c] prob. Nineveh was treacherous in dealing with other nations, and skilful in seducing them into idolatry. (5) **against thee,** ch. ii. 13. **discover,** *etc.*, Is. xlvii. 2, 3 ; Je. xiii. 22, 26. (6) **cast,** *etc.*, as on one put up to public dishonour.

Death.—

To be, or not to be, that is the question :—
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune ;
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

a "Nineveh not only practised cruelties, but handed the record of them down to posterity by representing them in all their horrors on the palace walls."—*Rawlinson.*

Jno. iii. 8.

b "Horsemen are seen in the most ancient sculptures of Nimroud. Disciplined bodies of cavalry were represented

in the bas-reliefs of Kouyunjik. The horsemen were armed with swords and bows, or with swords and long spears; they wore short tunics, and their legs and feet were bare. When riding without pads or saddles they sat with their knees almost on a level with the horse's back."—*Layard.*

c 2 Ki. ix. 22.

"Great cities are often called harlots upon the account of those vices wh. prevail in them, and infect others by their example."—*Lowth.*

d Shakespeare.

a "The deity Ammon appears to have been first worshipped by the Ethiopians, or Libyans, and afterwards by the Egyptians, who called him *Amun*. Herodotus tells us that there was an oracle sacred to Ammon at Meroe, and also at Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt."—*Bib Things.*

v. 7. *J. Randall*, 71.

"Pride and choler are like the fox offering to go out when his belly was full, which enlarging him bigger than the passage, made him stay, and be taken with shame. They that would come to preferment by pride are like those who would ascend stairs on horseback. Other dispositions may have the benefits

And, by opposing, end them? To die,—to sleep,—
No more;—and, by a sleep, to say we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to,—'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die;—to sleep;—
To sleep! perchance to dream;—ay, there's the rub:
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: There's the respect,
That makes calamity of so long life:
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life;
But that the dread of something after death,—
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns,—puzzles the will;
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of!
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.*d*

7—12. (7) flee, in fear and loathing. bemoan, express sorrow for thy richly deserved calamities. (8) No, marg. *No Amon*, or Thebes in Upper Egypt.*a* rivers, *i.e.* arms, or canals, of the Nile. sea, usual term for considerable bodies of water. (9) Ethiopia, Heb. *Cush*. poss. at the time master of Upper Egypt. strength, as allies. Put . . Lubim, Ge. x. 6, 13. helpers, or auxiliaries. (10) yet, nevertheless; in spite of all the help she had. young, *etc.*, comp. 2 Ki. viii. 12; Is. xiii. 16. cast lots, as if they were mere slaves. (11) drunken, Je. xxv. 17. be hid, or obscure, unknown. "Thou who wert once so glorious shalt be plunged in gloom." (12) firstripe figs, Is. xxviii. 4. Figs readily drop off when ripe.

Thebes, the No of prophecy.—The identity of No, mention of which occurs several times in the Prophets, with Thebes, is now scarcely disputed. This city was the most ancient capital, and renowned city of Egypt. It was also the chief seat of the worship of Jupiter Ammon, one of the gods of the Egyptians. It could furnish 20,000 armed chariots for warfare, and when captured by the Persians under Cambyses (B.C. 525), the spoil, in gold and silver talents, which fell into the hands of the conquerors, amounted to nearly two million pounds sterling. A graphic description of its present condition is given by Stephens in his *Incidents of Travel*. "The ancient city was twenty-three miles in circumference. The valley of the Nile was not large enough to contain it, and its extremities rested upon the bases of the mountains of Arabia and Africa. The whole of this great extent is more or less strewed with ruins, broken columns, and

avenues of sphinxes, colossal figures, obelisks, pyramidal gateways, porticoes, blocks of polished granite, and stones of extraordinary magnitude, while above them, 'in all the nakedness of desolation,' the colossal skeletons of giant temples are standing 'in the unwatered sands, in solitude and silence. They are neither grey, nor blackened; there is no lichen, no moss, no rank grass or mantling ivy, to robe them, and conceal their deformities. Like the bones of man, they seem to whiten under the sun of the desert.' The sand of Africa has been their most fearful enemy; blown upon them for more than three thousand years, it has buried the largest monuments, and, in some instances, almost entire temples. On the Arabian side of the Nile are the great temples of Luxor and Carnac. The temple of Luxor stands near the bank of the river, built there, as is supposed, for the convenience of the Egyptian boatmen. Before the magnificent gateway of this temple, until within a few years, stood two lofty obelisks, each a single block of red granite more than eighty feet high, covered with sculptures and hieroglyphics, fresh as if but yesterday from the hands of the sculptor. But great and magnificent as was the temple of Luxor, it served but as a portal to the greater Carnac. Standing nearly two miles from Luxor, the whole road to it was lined with rows of sphinxes, each of a solid block of granite. At this end they are broken, and, for the most part, buried under the sand and heaps of rubbish. But approaching Carnac they stand entire, still and solemn as when the ancient Egyptian passed between them to worship in the great temple of Ammon. Four grand propylons terminate this avenue of sphinxes, and, passing through the last, the scene which presents itself defies description. The field of ruins is about a mile in diameter; the temple itself 1,200 feet long and 420 broad. It has twelve principal entrances, each of which is approached through rows of sphinxes, as across the plain from Luxor, and each is composed of propylons, gateways, and other buildings, in themselves larger than most other temples; the sides of some of them are equal to the bases of most of the pyramids, and on each side of many are colossal statues, some sitting, others erect, from twenty to thirty feet in height. In front of the body of the temple is a large court, with an immense colonnade on each side, of thirty columns in length, and through the middle two rows of columns fifty feet in height; then an immense portico, the roof supported by 134 columns, from twenty-six to thirty-four feet in circumference. Next were four beautiful obelisks, more than seventy feet high, three of which are still standing; and then the sanctuary, consisting of an apartment about twenty feet square, the walls and ceiling of large blocks of highly-polished granite, the ceiling studded with stars on a blue ground, and the walls covered with sculpture and hieroglyphics representing offerings to Osiris, illustrating the mysterious uses of this sacred chamber, and showing the degraded character of the Egyptian worship. Beyond this is another colonnade, and again porticoes and walls to another propylon, at a distance of 2,000 feet from the western extremity of the temple. But these are not half of the ruins of Thebes. On the western side of the river, besides others prostrate and nearly buried under the sands, but the traces of which are still visible, the temples of Gornou, Northern Dair, Dair-el-

of a friendly monitor; but these by their vices do give a defiance to counsel. Since when men once know them, they will rather be silent, and let them rest in their folly, than by admonishing them, run into a certain brawl. There is another thing shows them to be both base. They are both most awed by the abject passion of the mind—fear. We dare neither be proud to one that can punish us, nor choleric to one that is above us. Every man flies from the burning house; and one of these hath a fire in his heart, and the other discovers it in his face. I would not live like a beast, pushed at by all the world for loftiness; nor yet like a wasp, stinging upon every touch. And this moreover shall add to my misliking them, that I hold them things accursed, for sowing of strife among them." —*Feltham.* "Remember what thou wert before thy birth—nothing; what thou wert for many years after—weakness; what in all thy life—a great sinner; what in all thy excellences—a mere debtor to God, to thy parents, to the earth, to all the creatures. Upon these or the like meditations, if we dwell, and frequently retire to them, we shall see nothing more

reasonable than to be humble, and nothing more foolish than to be proud."—*Bp. Taylor.*

a Is. xix. 16; Je. l. 37, li. 30.

b "Nineveh's doom is fixed, yet is she bidden ironically to make every preparation for a long siege."—*Spk. Com.*

"No wise man ever lost anything by cession; but he receives the hostility of violent persons into his embraces, like a stone into a lap of wool, it rests and sits down softly and innocently; but a stone falling upon a stone makes a collision, and extracts fire, and finds no rest; and just so are two proud persons, despised by each other, contemned by all, living in perpetual dissonances, always fighting against affronts, jealous of every person, disturbed by every accident, a perpetual storm within, and daily hissings from without."—*Taylor.*

a Spk. Com.

b "In the evenings, as soon as the air became cool, at Abeih, they literally camped in the hedges and loose stone walls, covering them over like a swarm of bees settled on a bush. There they remained until the next day's sun waxed warm, when they again commenced their march."—*Thomson.*

Medinet, the Memnonium, and Medinet Abou, with their columns, and sculpture, and colossal figures, still raise their giant skeletons above the sands. Volumes have been written upon them, and volumes may yet be written, and he that reads all will still have but an imperfect idea of the ruins of Thebes."

13—15. (13) **women**, *i.e.* as women for helplessness.[a] **gates**, or passes by wh. access is gained into thy country. (14) **draw**, *etc.*, *i.e.* make every possible provision for the siege, but all shall not avail.[b] **clay**, the material employed is often not clay, but simply moistened earth. **brickkiln**, both baked and sun-dried bricks seem to have been used. (15) **cankerworm**, a prophetic name for locusts. Joel i. 4.

Caius.—In Livy, the celebrated Roman historian (Book V. chap. 46), we have an account of an action performed by a worshipper of false gods, illustrative of our text. The circumstances under which it was done were such as would have deterred any but those actuated by a high sense of duty, and strong feelings of piety. It was when the Romans, after their disgraceful defeat at the river Allia by the Gauls, had shut themselves up in their Capitol, their last and only refuge, and lay, to all appearance, at the mercy of their besiegers, who prevented all ingress or egress, and hoped to force them to surrender by reducing them to the utmost extremities. Among the besieged was a member of the Fabian family, which had a stated yearly sacrifice on the Quirinal hill, one of the seven hills of Rome. The time of its observance had now returned. Nothing daunted by the terrors which surrounded him, Caius Fabius Dorso took the sacred utensils in his hand, descended from the Capitol, walking through the midst of the enemy's sentinels, and came to the hill selected for the purpose. Having there solemnly gone through all his religious exercises he returned to the Capitol. Neither in his countenance nor in his manner of walking did he betray the slightest fear. He hoped that the gods, whose worship not even the fear of death could make him neglect, would be propitious to him, and in this he was not disappointed. For the Gauls, either amazed at his extraordinary boldness, or respecting his religious ceremonies, allowed him to go and return unmolested.

16, 17. (16) **spoileth**, marg. *spreadeth himself.* (17) **crowned**, "the high officers of state were adorned with diadems, closely resembling the lower band of the royal mitre, separated from the cap itself."[a] **camp . . day**, settling in clusters on walls of loose stone or earth.[b]

The locust.—"The operation of the female locust in laying her eggs is highly interesting. She chooses a piece of light earth, well protected by a bush or hedge, where she makes a hole for herself, so deep that her head just appears above it; she here deposits an oblong substance, exactly the shape of her own body, which contains a considerable number of eggs, arranged in neat order, in rows against each other, which remain buried in the ground most carefully, and artificially protected from the cold of winter" (*Pliny*). "The eggs are brought into life by the heat of the sun. If the heats commence early, the locusts early gain strength, and it is then that their depredations are most feared, because they commence them before the corn has had time to

ripen, and they attack the stem when it is still tender. I conjecture that camping in the hedges in the cold day may be explained by the eggs being deposited during the winter; and when the sun ariseth they flee away, may also be illustrated by the flying away of the insect, as soon as it had felt the sun's influence."[c]

18, 19. (18) **shepherds**, or chief rulers. **nobles**, *marg.* valiant ones. (19) **bruise**, better, *breaking*. **bruit**, sound, report.[a] **clap . . hands**, in exulting triumph and joy.

Pericles.—So great was the disinclination of the great Pericles to the receiving of gifts, so utter his contempt for riches, that though he was the means of raising Athens to be the richest and most flourishing of all the Grecian states, though his power had surpassed that of many tyrants and kings, though he had long disposed in the most absolute manner of the treasures of Greece, he did not add a single drachm to the estate which he inherited from his father. In this we may discern the source, the true cause, of the supreme authority with which he ruled that fickle republic. The submission yielded to him was the just and deserved fruit of his integrity and perfect disinterestedness. Pure as was his conduct in this respect, however, it did not escape the envenomed shafts of faction. He was audaciously charged with embezzling the public money during his administration, and a decree was procured by which he was ordained to give in immediately his accounts. Although Pericles had no real cause to fear the strictest scrutiny into his conduct, he could not but be under some apprehensions for the decision of the people, when he reflected on their great levity and inconstancy. He prepared, however, to give obedience to the decree, and but for a hint given him by Alcibiades, then a very young man, would probably have subjected himself to the risk of a popular trial. Alcibiades, calling at his house one day, was told that he could not be spoken with, because of some affairs of great consequence in which he was then engaged. The young man inquiring what these mighty affairs might be, was answered that Pericles was preparing to give in his accounts. Alcibiades, smiling, remarked that were he in Pericles' place he would not give in any accounts. The observation being repeated to the statesman, it induced him to consider seriously, and at last to adopt, the policy thus incidentally suggested to him. In order, however, to divert the public attention from the subject, he resolved to oppose no longer, as he had done, the inclination which the people had expressed for the Peloponnesian war, but giving it every possible encouragement, turned their thoughts into a new channel, and made them forget the call they had made upon him, on a suspicion, the injustice of which was ere long abundantly manifest.[b]

The first French revolution.—

Account of the victims of the French Revolution, from the statements of the republican, Prudhomme :—

Nobles	1,278
Noble women	750
Wives of labourers and of artisans	1,467
Religieuses	350
Priests	1,135
Common persons (not noble)	13,523

c Morier.

a Fr. *bruit*, Lat. *brugire*, to rustle, roar, rattle.

"I do love these ancient ruins; we never tread upon them but we set our foot upon some rev'rend history; and questionless, here in this open court, which now lies naked to the injuries of stormy weather, some lie interr'd, loved the church so well, and gave so largely to't, they thought it should have canopied their bones till doomsday; but all things have their end; churches and cities, which have diseases like to men, must have like death that we have."—*Webster.*

b Percy Anec.

"Antisthenes, on a time, walked in the common place at Athens, with a cloak all torn and tattered, that every one beholding it might judge that he did it through humility; but Socrates, having discovered the hypocrisy, said that he saw his ambition through the holes of his cloak. Diogenes, once entering Plato's chamber, discovered his bed neatly made, and, jumping upon it, trampled it down, saying that he trampled

down Plato's pride. Plato answered that it was done with greater pride.

"In for a penny, in for a pound. He that takes the devil into his boat must ferry him over the sound."—*English.* "It is the first shower that wets."—*Italian.*

"It is all the same whether a man has both legs in the stocks, or one.—*German.* "There is nothing like being bespattered for making one defy the slough."—*French.*

c *Alison.*

"Make yourself an honest man, and then you may be sure that there is one rascal less in the world."—*Carlyle.*

Guillotined by sentence of the Revolutionary Tribunal		18,603
Women died of premature childbirth ...		3,400
In child-birth from grief		348
Women killed in La Vendée		15,000
Children killed in La Vendée		22,000
Men killed in La Vendée		900,000
Victims under Carrière at Nantes		32,000
Of whom were children shot ...	500	
Children drowned	1,500	
Women shot	264	
Women drowned	500	
Priests shot	300	
Priests drowned	460	
Nobles drowned	1,400	
Artisans drowned	5,300	
Victims at Lyons		31,000
Total		1,022,351

' It is in an especial manner remarkable in this dismal catalogue how large a proportion of the victims of the revolution were persons in the middling and lower ranks of life. The priests and nobles guillotined are only 2,413, while the persons of plebeian origin exceed 13,000! The nobles and priests put to death at Nantes were only 2,160, while the infants drowned and shot are 2,000, the women 764, and the artisans 5,300! So rapidly in revolutionary convulsions does the career of cruelty reach the lower orders, and so wide spread is the carnage dealt out to them, compared with that which they have sought to inflict on their superiors.'

HABAKKUK.

Introduction.

I. Author. HABAKKUK, = "*embrace.*" Of his history nothing whatever is known. **II. Time.** B.C. 612—598. **III. Design,** etc. The design of the book is to portray the coming destruction of Judah by the Chaldæans, and the retribution which should befall the latter. It concludes with an ode, which presents one of the most perfect specimens of Hebrew lyrical poetry; indeed, generally, in point of style, Habakkuk may rank with the most eminent Prophets. References to this book occur in Heb. x. 37; Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Acts xiii. 41. **IV. Style.** Habakkuk holds a distinguished place among the sacred poets; whoever reads his prophecy must be struck with the grandeur of his imagery and the sublimity of its style, especially of the hymn in the third chapter, which Bp. Lowth considers one of the most perfect specimens of the Hebrew ode. Michaelis, after a close examination, pronounces him to be a great imitator of former poets, but with some new additions of his own, which are characterised by brevity, and by no common degree of sublimity. (Comp. ii. 12 with Mic. iii. 10; and ii. 14 with Isa. xi. 9.)

Synopsis.

(According to Horne.)

The Prophecy of Habakkuk consists of two parts; the first is in the form of a dialogue between God and the Prophet, and the second is a sublime ode or hymn which was probably intended to be used in the public service.

PART I. The Prophet complaining of the growth of iniquity among the Jews..i. 1—4

God is introduced, announcing the Babylonish captivity as a punishment for their wickedness .....5—11

PART II. Contains the prayer or psalm of Habakkuk. In this prayer he implores God to hasten the deliverance of His people.....iii. 1, 2

And takes occasion to recount the wonderful works of the Almighty in conducting His people through the wilderness to the promised land .....3—16

Whence he encourages himself and other pious persons to rely upon God for making good His promises to their posterity in after ages.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—4. (1) **burden**, or prophetic denunciation. **Habakkuk**, meaning *embrace*. The word should be pronounced *Habâk-kuk*. (2) **cry**, for help against the violent, who seem to prosper.[a] (3) **shew me**, or let me see iniquity appearing to triumph. (4) **slacked**, seems to hesitate to touch these successful wicked men. **wicked**, *etc.*, Job xxi. 7 ; Je. xii. 1.

The importunate prayer (*v.* 2).—How long will He suffer His people to pray, and still neglect to hear? 1. Till they see the plague of their own hearts ; 2. Till the Church feels that she stands in the gap between God and a sin-destroyed world, and that He will be inquired of to do all that He has promised ; 3. Till they are willing to do whatever of duty He requires, in addition to praying ; 4. Till they have removed the stumbling-blocks out of the way of a revival of His work ; 5. Till He sees in them a disposition to give Him the glory of the work He does.[b]

5—8. (5) **behold ye**, *etc.*,[a] observe what is happening among the Gentiles. **wonder**, or be astounded. The thing remarkable was that the Chaldæans, who were then in alliance with Judæa, should become the Divine agents in inflicting punishment on Judæa. (6) **Chaldæans**, Ge. xi. 28. **bitter**, or warlike.[b] **hasty**, sudden and overwhelming inroads were characteristic features of their warfare. (7) **judgment**, *etc.*, *i.e.* they act entirely on their own will, without any consideration for others.[c] (8) **horses**, Nah. iii. 2. **leopards**, noted for swift, gliding, running.[d] **evening wolves**, sharp set with hunger.

Evening wolves (*v.* 8).—May not the furious creature represent —I. Our doubts and fears, after a day of distraction of mind, losses in business, and perhaps ungenerous tauntings from our fellow men? II. False teachers who craftily and industriously hunt for the precious life, devouring men by their falsehoods? III. What a wonder of grace it is when fierce persecutors are converted, for then the wolf dwells with the lamb, and men of cruel ungovernable dispositions become gentle and teachable.[e]

Eastern warfare (*v.* 8).—The Baron De Tott, in his entertaining work, has given us an account of the manner in which an army of modern Tartars conducted themselves, which serves greatly to illustrate this passage : "These particulars," says the baron, "informed the cham or prince, and the generals, what their real position was ; and it was decided that a third of the army, composed of volunteers, and commanded by a sultan and several mirzas, should pass the river at midnight, divide into several columns, subdivide successively, and thus overspread New Servia, burn the villages, corn, and fodder, and carry off the inhabitants of the country. The rest of the army, in order to follow the plan concerted, marched till they came to the beaten track in the snow made by the detachment. This we followed, till we arrived at the place where it divides into seven branches, to the left of which we constantly kept, observing never to mingle or confuse ourselves with any of the subdivisions which we successively found ; and some of which were only small paths, traced by one

a "The Prophet proposes the common objections against Providence taken from the prosperity of the wicked and the oppression of the righteous, which has been a stumbling-block to good men."—*Lowth.*
vv. 3, 4. *J. Milner*, i. 225.
v. 4. *R. Hooker*, iii. 482.
b *Dr. A. Clark.*

a Acts xiii. 41; Paul quotes from the Sept. Version.

b Comp. Je. l. 42.

c "The Chaldee will be a law unto himself. . . . Self-asserting and irresponsible judgment will be the fit instrument of punishment on the authors of wrong judgment.—*Spk. Com.*

d "Agile, swift, and when irritated the most terrible and cruel of beasts."—*Tristram.*

e *C. H. Spurgeon.*

f *Paxton*

The wicked will be raised from the dead by a power without them, the people of God by a power within them : the one by the voice of the Son of God, the other by His indwelling Spirit. The hypocrite has God in his mouth, but the world in his heart.

or two horsemen. Flocks were found frozen to death on the plain, and twenty columns of smoke, already rising in the horizon, completed the horrors of the scene, and announced the fires which had laid waste New Servia." The difficulties which have attended the explanation of this prediction are thus happily removed, and the propriety of the expression fully established.*f*

9—11. (9) **for violence**, with violent intentions, and punishing the violence of the princes and leaders. **sup up**, swallow up, or lick up, as the east wind licks up moisture. **as the sand**, "as the wind drives the sand before it in confused heaps." (10) **heap dust**, making thus an embankment, from whence to attack the city.[a] (11) **mind change**, he shall be spoiled by his successes; "he defies God, and deifies himself."[b]

The agger or mount (*v.* 10).—Another contrivance which the besiegers employed was the agger or mount, which they raised so high as to equal, if not exceed, the top of the besieged walls: the sides were supported with bricks or stones, or secured with strong rafters to hinder it from falling; the forepart only remained bare, because it was to be advanced by degrees nearer the city. The pile itself consisted of all sorts of materials, as earth, timber, boughs, stones; into the middle were cast also wickers, and twigs of trees to fasten, and, as it were, cement the other parts. The prophet Habakkuk manifestly refers to the mount, in that prediction where he describes the desolating march of the Chaldæans, and the success of their arms.[c]

12, 13. (12) **art**, *etc.*,[a] these are the words of Habakkuk, as representing believing Israel. They are spoken in "opposition to the impious deifying of the Chaldæans' power as their god." **not die**, or be destroyed under Thy judgments. **for correction**, not for destruction. To His people all Divine dealings are chastisements. (13) **purer eyes**, *etc.*, Ps. v. 4, 5; Je. xii. 1, 2. **wherefore**, *etc.*, reference is to the strangeness of God's using so bad a nation as the Chaldæans for His purposes.[b]

The holiness of God (*v.* 13).—The words of the text contain a general truth which it behoves us all most seriously to consider. I. What evidence has God given us of this truth. 1. In a way of judgment; 2. In a way of mercy. II. What lessons it inculcates on every one of us. 1. To repent of our former sins; 2. To flee to the Lord Jesus for refuge; 3. To implore of God the sanctifying influences of His Holy Ghost.[c]

God is present.—The celebrated Linnæus testified, in his conversation, writings, and actions, the greatest sense of God's omniscience; yea, he was so strongly impressed with the idea, that he wrote over the door of his library, *Innocui vivite, Numen adest*—Live innocently, God is present.[d]

14—17. (14) **as the fishes**, the point of comparison is that the fishes have no corporate life, and no orderly government. **creeping things**, Ps. civ. 25. (15) **angle**, or hook. **drag**, or long net, wh. is dragged through the water.[a] **rejoice**, glorying in their crimes because they are successful. (16) **sacrifice . . net**, *i.e.* their arms, power, and military skill. (17) **empty**, *etc.*, *i.e.* carry away the spoil of the nations successfully. "Shall they, without interruption, be permitted to enjoy the fruits of their violence?"[b]

Self-worship (*v.* 16).—I. Self-worship as manifested in reference

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a "The raising an embankment against it is only like casting up a heap of dust, and the city falls before it."—*Wordsworth.*
b Some render "Then he sweeps on as a wind, and passes over, and is guilty, he, whose might is his god." "The principle of ungodliness developed by a series of aggressions, finding its full expression in self-worship, can have but one issue—ruin never long delayed."—*Spk. Com.*
c *Paxton.*

a Ps. xc. 2, xciii. 2, cii. 27.

b "Seemest to connive at, or dost not show any dislike at, the violence of those idolatrous Chaldæans."—*Lowth.*

v. 13. *Bp. Talbot*, 39; *Dr. J. Orr*, iv. 118; *Dr. J. Leland*, i. 199; *W. Richardson*, i. 59.

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

d *Cheever.*

a "Fishing on a larger scale is done by means of a long net, some three or four feet in width, with pieces of lead attached one side to sink it, and of cork on the other to keep it afloat. The operation is per-

to our secular work. 1. Always common; 2. Specially common in our age; 3. Frequently rebuked by the dispensations of Divine Providence. II. Self-worship as manifested in reference to our spiritual work. 1. In our motives; 2. In our spirit.[c]

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—4. (1) **stand . . watch,** Is. xxi. 8. *Watch tower;* position of eminence from whence the country around may be viewed.[a] "The 'watch-post' is the withdrawal of the whole soul from earthly and fixing it on heavenly things." **unto me,** better, "*within me.*" (2) **make it plain,** De. xxvii. 8. **table,** or tablets, suitable for public inscriptions. **run,** *etc., i.e.* that one running by in haste may be able to read it at a glance. (3) **appointed time,** but there will be some delay before it is fulfilled. **end,** *comp.* Da. xi. 27. **speak,** or transpire.[b] **not tarry,** not really, though to human view the period may seem to be prolonged: God's time is always kept. (4) **lifted up,** or haughty. **just . . faith,**[c] *i.e.* his faith in God's Word.

The watch-tower of prayer (*v.* 1).—I. Watch for things to pray about. II. Watch for times to pray. III. Watch for answers to prayer.[d]—*The Christian sentinel* (*v.* 1).—I. The mind of the Prophet as our example. II. The mind of God as our encouragement. Improvement:—1. Consider the text as it bears a public aspect; 2. A private aspect; 3. A broad and general aspect.[e]—*Duty in reference to the promises* (*v.* 3).—I. The certainty of the promises. 1. There is a time fixed for their accomplishment; 2. When the time arrives the promise shall be fulfilled. II. Our duty in respect to them. Wait—1. In humility; 2. In faith; 3. In patience. Infer—(1) How attentive we should be to the promises; (2) How ashamed of yielding to unbelief; (3) How awful the state of sinners.[f]

Dr. Manton.—Dr. Harris relates, that while Dr. Manton was minister at Covent Garden he was called on to preach before the lord mayor, and the companies of the city, at St. Paul's. He studied for the occasion an elaborate discourse, and was heard by the most intelligent part of his congregation with great admiration. But as he was returning home in the evening, a poor man pulled the sleeve of his gown, and asked if he was the gentleman who had preached before the lord mayor in the morning. On the doctor's replying in the affirmative, the man added, "Sir, I came with the hope of getting some good for my soul, but I was greatly disappointed; for I could not understand a great deal of what you said; you were quite above me." The doctor wept, and replied, "Friend, if I did not give you a sermon, you have given me one; and, by the grace of God, I will never again play the fool, in preaching before my lord mayor in such a manner."[g]—*Teaching must be plain—A false signal.*—Think of that railway excursion train as it hurries onwards with impetuous speed! A vast crowd is collected there, and how various and complicated are the interests of each! A rapid impulse bears forward the whole; that impulse resides in every member of the group; one single bystander directs and controls it all. In an unexpected moment a shock, as of a thunderbolt, crushes them together; in the twinkling of an eye

formed by men occupying two boats."—*Van Lennep.*
b Fausset.
c G. Brooks.

a "The Prophets often compare themselves, awaiting the revelations of Jehovah with earnest patience, to watchmen on an eminence watching with intent eye all that comes within their view."—*Fausset.*

Is. xxi. 11; Je. vi. 17; Eze. iii. 17, xxxiii. 2, 3; Mi. vii. 4.

b A living movement, a hasting or panting towards the end."—*Pusey.*

c Jno. iii. 36; Ro. i. 17; Ga. iii. 11; He. x. 38.

v. 1. *Dr. G. Croft,* ii. 197; *G. S. Drew,* 108.

v. 3. *J. Saurin,* viii. 273; *B. Beddome,* 1; *J. H. Pott,* ii. 412.

v. 4. *R. Hooker,* 597; *J. Saurin,* ix. 239; *W. Reading,* ii. 554; *G. S. Faber,* ii. 125: *Dr. W. Stevens,* iii. 229; *W. J. E. Bennett,* ii. 126; *Ld. A. Hervey,* ii. 293; *F. D. Maurice, Pro. and Kgs.* 300.

d Dr. Edmond.

e R. Cecil, M.A.

f C. Simeon, M.A

g R. T. S.

the elements of destruction are terribly let loose; each hapless one becomes an instrument of injury or death to his neighbour. What pen can paint the terror, the agony, the anguish of such a scene! They will be remembered for long, long years in mutilated forms, in shaken nerves, in bereaved or orphaned homes; the records will make multitudes shudder by their firesides, or will haunt them in their slumbers. Such have been the effects of one false or mistaken signal! Let us who are ministers of the Gospel remember what interests we hold, and by how much the soul is more precious than the body. Let us beware! There are, in the age in which we live, spiritual impulses innumerable, strange, impetuous. And we are the signalmen.[h]

Watchfulness necessary to holiness.—Without perpetual watchfulness and diligence, holiness can never be attained; for the moment thou beginnest to relax in these, thou wilt feel inward imbecility, disorder, and disquietude. . . . Thou wilt make greater advances in imitating the life of Christ, in nothingness. . . . He will give His Spirit to them that ask Him, when He is considerately asked and sought for; not formally, not slightly, not in words of course; but as feeling our own blindness, and darkness, and deadness, and impotency; or where there is not, as yet, the light of a saint, there is that of a man, and that is to be improved and made use of, in order to our higher light; and if there be that self-reflection to which God hath given to every man a natural ability, much more may be known than usually is. It belongs to the nature of man to turn his eyes inwards. The mind of man, as an intellectual sun, can turn its beams inward upon itself, and take cognisance of what is done within him; and what dispositions and indispositions are within. . . . Take heed of setting the imagination of a secret will of God not to give His Spirit, against His plain and most expressly revealed will, that He will give His Spirit to them that ask it—that is, that do considerately ask it, as apprehending the state of their case.[i]

5—8. (5) **transgresseth by wine**, the description of the Chaldæan as one "intoxicated with his successes, and not knowing how to set any bounds to his ambition."[a] **hell**, here the emblem of an insatiable temper. **as death**, the foe with whom no man can make reconciliation. (6) **all these**, the nations crushed by the Chaldæans. **parable**, or figurative speech. **against him**, in the day of his calamity. **ladeth . . clay**, or with a heavy pledge, *i.e.* contracts a heavy burden of debt.[b] (7) **they**, *etc.*, the Medo-Persian conquerors. (8) **remnant . . thee**, the conquerors of Babylon were a mixed people, made up of the nations crushed by Babylon.

Discontent.—It was a true word of wise Bion, in Laertius, who, when he was asked what man lived most unquietly, answered, He that in a great estate affects to be prosperous. In all experience, he that sets too high a pitch to his desires lives upon the rack; neither can be loosed till he remit of his great thoughts, and resolve to clip his wings and train, and to take up with the present. Very seasonable and witty was that answer which Cyneas, in the story, gave to ambitious Pyrrhus, when that great conqueror began speech of his designs. Well, said Cyneas, when thou hast vanquished the Romans, what wilt thou then do? I will then, said Pyrrhus, sail over to Sicily. And what wilt thou do, said Cyneas, when that is won? Then w

It is said of one of the old Greek philosophers that, as a remedy against sleeping too long or too soundly, he used to lie holding a metal ball in his hand over a basin of brass, so that almost the slightest change of posture would cause the ball to fall into the basin and waken him.

h J. G. Miall.

"An outsider is very useful to an insider. As the engineer cannot steer, being down below among the machinery, he is very much helped by the man who is on the look-out: and men that are buried in the hull of their affairs ought to be thankful if there is anybody on deck that can keep a look-out, and tell which way the ship is going." — *Spurgeon.*

i Howe.

a Lowth.

"Love of wine often begets a proud contempt of Divine things, as in Belshazzar's case, which was the immediate cause of the fall of Babylon."—*Fausset.*

b "The acquisitions of the Chaldæans are represented as so many pledges extorted from the conquered, and reclaimable by them; the greater the amount the heavier the debt and the retribution."—*Spk. Com.*

we, said Pyrrhus, subdue Africa. Well, and when that is effected, what wilt thou, said Cyneas, then do? Why, then, said Pyrrhus, we will sit down and spend the rest of our time merrily and contentedly. And what hinders thee, said Cyneas, that without all this labour and peril thou canst not now do so beforehand? Certainly, nothing lies cross the way of our contentation but our own thoughts, and those the all-wise God leaves there on purpose for the just torture of great hearts.[c]

9—11. (9) **coveteth**, *etc.*, Je. xxii. 13. "A covetousness so surpassingly evil as to be fatal to himself." **nest**, prob. referring to the royal citadel, wh. was built high, like the Babel-tower. (10) **shame**, or ruin. Brought disgrace upon yourself.[a] (11) **stone**, this, and the tie-beam, are supposed to be witnesses of the wickedness.[b]

Note on v. 11.—The margin has, instead of "answer it," "or witness against." When a man denies what he has solemnly promised, the person who complains of his perfidy says, "The place where you stood shall witness against you." "A beautiful princess was once enjoying herself in a fragrant grove, when a noble prince passed that way; she became enamoured of his person, and he solemnly promised to return and marry her. When he left her, she wept bitterly, and said, 'Ah! should he not return, this tali-tree (*pandanus odoratissima*) shall witness against him. Yes, the birds shall be my witnesses.'"[c]

No one contented.—

Laid in my quiet bed, in study as I were,
I saw within my troubled head a heap of thoughts appear;
And every thought did show so lively in mine eyes, [rise.
That now I sighed, and then I smiled, as cause of thoughts did

I saw the little boy, and thought how oft that he
Did wish of God, to 'scape the rod, a tall young man to be;
The young man eke, that feels his bones with pains oppressed,
How he would be a rich old man, to live and lie at rest;

The rich old man, that sees his end draw on so sore,
How he would be a boy again, to live so much the more.
Whereat, full oft I smiled, to see how all those three, [gree.
From boy to man, from man to boy, would chop and change de-

And musing thus, I think the case is very strange,
That man from wealth, to live in woe, doth ever seek to change,
Thus, thoughtful as I lay, I saw my withered skin,
How it doth show my dented chews; the flesh was worn so thin.

And eke my toothless chaps, the gates of my right way,
That opes and shuts as I do speak, do thus unto me say,
"The white and hoarish hairs, the messengers of age,
That show, like lines of true belief, that this life doth assuage,

"Bids thee lay hand and feel them hanging on thy chin,
The which doth write, to ages past, the third now coming in.
Hang up, therefore, the bit of thy young wanton time;
And thou, that therein beaten art, the happiest life define."

Whereat I sighed, and said, "Farewell my wonted Toy,
Truss up thy pack, and trudge from me, to every little boy,
And tell them thus from me,—Their time most happy is,
If, to their time, they reason had to know the truth of this."[d]

c *Bishop Hall.*

a Pr. viii. 36, xx. 2.

They who wrong their neighbours do much greater wrong to their own souls.

b "The special witness made is that the money and materials wherewith he built the house were unjustly gotten."—*Mat. Henry.*

v. 9. *W. Nind*, i. 267.

c *Roberts.*

"Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content—the quiet mind is richer than a crown: sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent—the poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown. Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss, beggars enjoy when princes oft do miss. The homely house that harbours quiet rest, the cottage that affords no pride nor care, the mean, that 'grees with country music best, the sweet consort of Mirth's and Music's fare. Obscured life sits down a type of bliss; a mind content both crown and kingdom is."—*Greene.*

d *Howard, Earl of Surrey*

12–14. (12) blood, or violence and blood-shedding.[a] (13) labour . . fire, or "to suffice the fire;" only to have their works burned up. very vanity, *see* Je. li. 58. (14) earth . . sea, Is. xi. 9.[b]

The good news.—Mr. Williams, in his valedictory address, says: "We feel that we have something worth carrying—we have the Gospel of Jesus Christ; we have the great doctrine of the atonement to carry! Allow me to state, in reference to that great truth, that I feel just exactly as did a celebrated infidel with whom Dr. Philip was on one occasion arguing. The infidel said, 'Why, Dr. Philip, you do not believe the doctrines you preach; you professors of Christianity do not believe what you profess.' 'What do you mean?' said the doctor. 'If I believed,' replied the infidel, 'that God had given His Son to die for a wretched world, and that, in order to our salvation, it was necessary that this truth should be known, I would go round the world to tell it.' Now, we believe it, and therefore we go round the world to tell it; and the great story we have to tell is, 'God so loved the world, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"[c]—*Circulation of the Bible.*—They cannot stop the progress of Bible societies. Sooner may they arrest the sun at the antipodes, and prevent his rising to illuminate our horizon; sooner may they confine the winds in the cave of Æolus, never again to cool and refresh our atmosphere; sooner may they stem the mighty stream that leaves the mountain's sides, and interdict its progress to the ocean. For the Word of God shall accomplish that which He pleases; it shall prosper in the thing whereunto He has sent it; the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea: the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.[d]

15–17. (15) neighbour drink, "The besotted drunkard is a striking image of an outwitted and conquered enemy." look, *etc.*, a fig. for shameful defeat. (16) shame, represented by the loathsome condition and doings of drunkards. (17) Lebanon, prob. here a fig. for the city of Jerusalem. Or the cruelty of the Medes, etc., would be like the violence of wild beasts in the Lebanon forests.[a]

Alarm to distillers (*v.* 15).—The business of distilling—1. Confers no benefits on your fellow-men; 2. Is not only useless, but is the occasion of many and great evils; 3. Destroys to a great extent the bounties of Providence; 4. You offend the virtuous and respectable part of the community; 5. You pursue a pernicious calling in opposition to great light; 6. If you persevere it will be at the expense of your own reputation and that of your posterity; 7. Prosecuting this business in a day of light and reform you peculiarly offend God and endanger your immortal interests.[b]

Blasting and mildew.—Blasting and mildew were very frequent in Bible lands and times. Along with war and pestilence, they were the most common judgments inflicted by God upon His ungrateful and rebellious people, and were universally regarded, not merely as a visitation of God, but as a special product of God's creative power. The cause and the effect were confounded. Since that time, men have tried to find out, in secondary causes, the rationale of the pestilence that so long walked in darkness. It was natural to seek in occult regions for the explanation of

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a Mi. iii. 10. "Who hath raised the greatness of his capital city Babylon upon the ruins of many other cities, and the destruction of their inhabitants."—*Lowth.* "Shall not God have His turn, when cruel rapacious men have triumphed so long, though He seems now to be still?"—*Calvin.*

b "The earth will not only be filled with the *glory* of the Lord, but with the *knowledge* of it. Men will *recognise* it. It will be filled with that knowledge, as the sea is covered with waters, which lie deep, spread far, and will never be dried up."—*Wordsworth.*

c *Whitecross.*

d *Summerfield.*

a "As thou didst hunt men as wild beasts, so shalt thou be hunted thyself as a wild beast, which thou resemblest in cruelty."—*Faussett.*

v. 16. *G. Marriott*, 127.

b *B. Dickinson, M.A.*

"Learn to be contented with your condition. Is that animal better that hath two or three mountains to graze on than a little bee that feeds on dew or manna, and lives on what falls every morning from the clouds, the storehouses of heaven? Can a man quench his thirst better out

an occult mystery ; and therefore it was attributed to meteoric influences, to lunar eclipses, to certain combinations of the planets. Modern science has given the true interpretation of the riddle. Blasting and mildew are now conclusively ascertained to be produced by plants ; to be the diseases occasioned by the growth of minute fungi. Ever since plants have existed. these vegetable parasites have preyed upon them. They appear in greater or less abundance every year, are fostered into excessive growth by certain favourable conditions of soil and climate, and checked in their development by certain unfavourable conditions. There are four diseases in corn produced by fungi—smut, bunt, rust, and mildew. The last term is very vague and unsatisfactory. In modern times, as indeed by the Hebrews, it represents no definite idea, or a very different idea to different individuals. The farmer, the vine grower, the hop cultivator, the gardener, the housewife, apply it indiscriminately to the effect produced by different species, and even genera, of fungi upon the objects of their care. Speaking with scientific accuracy, the term mildew should be restricted to that disease of corn which is caused by the fungus known to botanists as the *Puccinia graminia*. It is derived from the Saxon words *mehl-thau*, meaning meal dew, and makes its appearance in the corn-fields in May or June, and first takes possession of the lower green leaves, which become sickly, and break out through the skin which rises round them in blisters into rusty patches, as though the corn-stalk had been powdered with red ochre. Examined under the microscope, these red patches resolve themselves into dense masses of round one-celled spores, rising from the midst of delicate branched threads, which insinuate themselves in a complete network amongst the cells of the diseased leaf. A month or two later it changes its colour gradually from a rusty red to a deep brown tint ; and under the microscope its spores become pear-shaped, each tapering gradually into a stalk, and also two-celled—each cell filled with granular contents. Finally, when the corn is nearly or fully ripe, the straw and the culm are profusely streaked with blackest spots, ranging in length from a minute dot to an inch. This is the fully developed mildew. and once seen is not likely to be mistaken for anything else. When the fungus is abundant a field which promised well in the blossoming time grievously disappoints the farmer in the harvest and the threshing season, the reason of the deficit being often wrapped up in mystery to him. The cereals are not the only food plants exposed to the attacks of blasting and mildew. Onions, cabbages, turnips, beetroot, peas, spinach, gourds—in short, all the green crops we raise, often suffer severely from this scourge. Leprous mildews of different species are now and then fearfully fatal to the coffee plantations of Ceylon, the orange groves of St. Michael, the olive woods in the south of Europe, the mulberry tree of Syria and China, and the cotton-fields of India. All of these blights and mildews on the corn crops and green crops may well be called by God, "My great army." Individually minute and insignificant. by the sheer force of untold numbers they are mightier for harm than storms and earthquakes.[c]

18–20. (18) **what profiteth**, in the time of national calamity and Divine judgments. **dumb idols**, Ps. cxv. 5. (19)

of a river than a full cup, or drink better from the fountain which is finely paved with marble than when it wells over the green turf ?"—*Jeremy Taylor.*

"I drank ; I liked it not ; 'twas rage, 'twas noise, an airy scene of transitory joys. In vain I trusted that the flowing bowl would banish sorrow, and enlarge the soul ; to the late revel, and protracted feast, wild dreams succeeded, and disorder'd rest."—*Prior.*

"When fumes of wine do once the brain possess, then follows straight an indisposèdness throughout, the legs so fetter'd in that case, they cannot with their reeling trunk keep pace. The tongue trips, mind droops, eyes stand full of water ; noise, hiccough, brawls, and quarrels follow after."—*Lucretius.*

"Experience has proved that almost all crime into which juries have to inquire may be traced, in one way or other, to the habits of drunkenness."—*Judge Williams.*

c *H. Macmillan.*

a LXX. rend. "Stand in awe of Him."

"Comp. the silence in a court of justice when a judge pronounces the sentence."—*Lowth.*

wood . . stone, of wh. the idol figures were made. no breath, as sign of life. (20) Lord, Jehovah : the One and living God. temple, Ps. xi. 4. silence,[a] so that they may hear what He may say unto them : or in token of reverent and submissive attention to His judgments.

God greatly to be feared (*v.* 20).—Let us here contemplate—I. The majesty of Jehovah. 1. As in the temple of the universe ; 2. As in the person of Jesus Christ. II. Our duty towards Him. We must behold Him—1. With reverential awe ; 2. With meek submission ; 3. With humble affiance ; 4. With unreserved obedience. Apply :—(1) Reproof ; (2) Encouragement.[b]

v. 20. *J. Duche.* ii. 409 ; *Dr. W. Dealtry*, v. 399 ; *H. J. Hastings*, 334.

[b] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—4. (1) a prayer, including praise and meditation, as well as petition. upon Shigionoth,[a] *comp.* title of Ps. vii., a Psalm "remarkable for vivacity, rapid and vigorous transitions, and vivid imagery." (2) thy speech, communicating to me Thy Divine judgments. revive thy work, or accomplish once again the rescue and deliverance of Thy people. "Though we seem, as it were, dead nationally, revive us." midst . . years, *i.e.* during our very captivity. (3) Teman . . Paran, the region of God's manifestation at the giving of the law.[b] (4) horns, or streams, beams of light. hiding, or shading, so that it might not be overwhelming to man.

The work of revival (*v.* 2).—I. Some particulars respecting this work. 1. The work itself ; 2. Why it may be called God's work ; 3. When God may be said to revive it. II. How we may and should contribute towards its revival. 1. We should labour for it ; 2. We should live for it ; 3. We should pray for it. III. Why we should thus interest ourselves in its revival. 1. We are excited to this by piety ; 2. We are urged to this by the love of mankind ; 3. We are obligated to this by prudence ; 4. We are animated to this by a well-supported hope. Apply :—(1) The state of God's work among us should excite corresponding affections in us ; (2) We should consider and deplore our deficiencies ; (3) We should improve our convictions by renewed application to God for mercy and help.[c]

Teman and Paran.—Teman is the name given to the region extending from the south of Palestine to Mount Sinai ; Paran is the name of a mountain in the wilderness of Paran, also south of Palestine. Dr. Henderson (on the Minor Prophets at this place) remarks : "From Sinai occurring along with Seir and Paran (Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2), and with Seir and the country of Edom (Judges v. 4, 5), it is probable that Habakkuk here alludes to the regions to the south of Palestine generally, as the theatre of the Divine manifestations to Israel, only, specifying the two points nearer to that country." Teman in the one clause is parallel to Paran in the other, as God is to Holy One, according to the style of Hebrew poetry. God came down on the top of Sinai, and thence displayed His glory before His people, and marched with them through the wilderness towards the Holy Land. The Prophet refers, in the highest style of poetry, to the Lord's former favours bestowed on the Israelites, as encouraging the hope that He will bless His people still.[d]

[a] "The term appears to mean a composition characterised by vehement emotions and sudden transitions."—*Wordsworth.*

[b] "He adopts the imagery of Moses (De. xxxiii. 2), of Deborah (Jud. v. 4, 5), and of David (Ps. lxviii. 7).

v. 2. *R. Erskine*, ix. 255; *E. Bather*, i. 188 ; *W. Fenn*, 134.

[c] *Alpha* in 400 Sks.

"In His hand He took the golden compasses prepar'd, in God's eternal store, to circumscribe this universe and all created things ; one foot He centred, and the other turn'd round through the vast profundity obscure, and said, thus far extend, thus far thy bounds, this be thy just circumference, O world."—*Milton.*

[d] *Sunday-School Times.*

5, 6. (5) **pestilence**, as His agent in His judgments. **burning coals**, or burning heat, a poetical figure for fever-disease, or perhaps lightning-strokes. (6) **measured**, *etc.*, as a general first estimates his work, and forms his plans. **drove asunder**, or convulsed, with the first signs of His wrath. **mountains**, *etc.*, figures of the most stable things.[a]

The pestilence (*v.* 5).—The place of the pestilence under the Divine administration, as connected with the moral government of God. I. Examine some prevalent opinions in regard to the matter which seem to be erroneous. 1. Some do not recognise the hand of God in such visitations; 2. Some do, but not on Bible principles. II. What are we to regard as the true doctrine on the subject, and as the true principles of judging in the case? 1. There is a class of sins that bring their own punishment; 2. All things, even storms, etc., are under the control of God. III. The lessons of the visitation. 1. God rules in the nations of the earth; 2. God has hidden resources for effecting His purposes; 3. This may be regarded as an extraordinary means of arresting the attention of mankind; 4. Such a visitation is of the nature of a proclamation in favour of virtue and piety.[b]

7–9. (7) **Cushan**, or Ethiopia; poetical allusion to the Egyptian overthrow, when Israel was delivered. **Midian**, perhaps with allusion to the later deliverance in the time of Gideon. (8) **rivers**, the Red Sea, and the Jordan. By this sudden question the Prophet sets us on considering the gracious purpose of the Divine dealings. **salvation**, for Thy people: though they seemed to be only for destruction. (9) **quite naked**, drawn out from its sheath, and set quite ready for use. **oaths**, *etc.*, or, in order to fulfil Thy oaths to the tribes. **cleave**, by earthquake. Some refer to the bringing of the waters from the rocks.

Oriental bows (*v.* 9).—The Oriental bows, according to Chardin, were usually carried in a case hung to their girdles; it was sometimes of cloth, but more commonly of leather. The expression in these words of the Prophet must consequently be understood of the bow when out of the case.[a]

10–12. (10) **lifted . . high**, fig. of the great, storm-driven waves. (11) **sun**, *etc.*, Jos. x. 12. **light . . arrows**, the hailstones and the lightning. **glittering**, Heb. *lightning-spear*.[a] (12) **thresh**, as the wheat is threshed with the flail, or with the roller.

God supreme over all.—

O God supreme, sole, all the gods to Thee
Restore their stolen titles. Thou alone
Hast true right to the names of Deity.
First cause, and imperceptible, unseen;
If apprehended, only by pure soul;
Source of all life, transcendent and etern;
Source of all measure, motion, time, and change;
Who makest, movest, rulest all; Thyself
Impassible, immovable, unmade;
The one great Spirit of the Universe.
Who the world made of Heaven and earth, as man
Of mind and body. Father of all Life,
Whose living spirit animates the whole;

a Na. i. 5.

"The mountains and hills are spoken of as emblems of eternity, because time seems to make no change or alteration in them."—*Lowth.*

b *Albert Barnes.*

"Pleasures of the mind are more at command than those of the body. A man may think of a handsome performance, or of a notion that pleases him, at his leisure. This entertainment is ready, with little warning or expense; a short recollection brings it upon the stage, brightens the idea, and makes it shine as much as when it was first stamped upon the memory."—*Jeremy Collier.*

a *Harmer.*

a "His brazen arms like flames of lightning shone, which the great Thunderer launches from his arm."—*Homer.*

v. 11. *Dr. Collyer*, 249.

"A young child, who has hitherto fancied that the rim of the sky rests on the earth a few miles away, and that the whole world lies within that circle, sails down the Forth there, and sees the river banks

gradually widening, and the river passing into a frith. When he comes back, he tells his young companions how large the ocean is. Poor boy, he has not seen the ocean, only the widened river. Just so with all creature knowledge of God. Though all the archangels were to utter all they know, there would still remain an infinity untold.—*Culross.*

"As alchemists spend that small modicum they have to get gold, and never find it, so we lose and neglect eternity for a little momentary pleasure which we cannot enjoy, nor shall we ever attain to in this life."—*Burton.*

Governs and guides to ends both blessed and wise;
Gave mind its active power; to nature gives
Eternal pregnancy, perpetual birth;
And reasonable order, aye renewed;
The light of Heaven, the Parent of the world.
Who art eternally, and causest things
To be which heretofore have never been;
The Sovereign Will, the Intellect, the soul,
The perfect good, the perfect fair, the All;
One immaterial, who by one sole act
Dost all things comprehend; and bliss supreme
Enjoyest, by knowing perfectly Thyself.
Among the worlds how many are Thy names!
For as the sun in divers tongues hath names
As many, yet to all men is but one,
So Thou, however named, art God, the sole
Creator and Adorner of the Heavens;
Ruler most high of gods, and Sire of man,
First, best and greatest of all Beings, last;
Kind Conqueror of all foes; of all create
The infinite reason, the substantive cause;
The forces of all life impersonate.
Thou knowest and foreknowest all at once;
Thou givest good and evil to all souls.
Thine arm sweeps over sea and land; Thine eye
Pierceth all elements, to the Hadean shades,
Where Thou art throned, too, as in upper skies,
Thy throne coequal with the universe.
The proud thou dost rebuke with death; with life
Immortal dost reward the just and true.
All who have served or loved Thee, Thou dost love,
And worship givest of all men in the heavens.
With souls beneficent, innocent, and pure,
Thou dost the largest and the loveliest stars
For aye consociate. All belongs to Thee,
And those who love Thee; heaven and all its worlds.[b]

b Bailey.

13—16. (13) **woundest,** *etc.*, Ps. lxviii. 21, cx. 6. **discovering the foundation,**[a] overturning the house or city, so that the very foundations are disclosed. (14) **head,** or chief men. **villages,** better, warriors: the petty kings of the several clans. **as a whirlwind,** Zec. ix. 14. **devour,** as wild beasts carry their prey to their dens to enjoy it secretly. (15) **heap,** *etc.*, Ex. xv. 8. (16) **trembled,** *etc.*,[b] the usual signs of fear wh. all good men feel when visions and manifestations of God are granted to them. **day of trouble,** that alluded to in the closing sentence of the verse.[c]

Activity of God.—The most intensely thoughtful, and the most intensely active, of any being in the universe, is God; and all the power and all the majesty of His administration are for the production of good everywhere; and every violation of His wishes is a violation of a tendency towards the production of good. He is never tired, He is never weary, of His work. Such is our God, that sits in the heavens for ever and for ever, legislating by His thoughts and by His will—for He has no framework of government such as we imagine when we speak of legislation. By the whole personal influence of His being, by all

a The neck is the emblem of dignity and power, and sometimes of stubbornness and pride.

b In the Heb. idea, the belly is the seat of physical emotion; the bones are the seat of intensest pain.

c "The allusion is evidently to the bands of Chaldæans, Syrians, etc., sent against Jehoiakim after his rebellion. (2 Ki. xxiv. 2.)"—*Spk. Com.*

His breathings, by His wishes, by His thoughts and feelings, He is perpetually studying how to raise about Him in this world, and in other worlds—if there be any that are populated—those intelligences that shall approach to Him in power of thought, and moral excellence, and perfectness of joy. This is God's avocation.[d]

17—19. (17) **although**, *etc.*, the expression of a simple but assured confidence, which could endure through all calamity. **fig..vines..olive**, the three principal and most important fruit trees of Canaan. All those were carefully cultivated.[a] **no meat**, or food, corn and vegetables. (18) **rejoice**, in the quiet assurance that Jehovah will both deliver and provide. (19) **hinds' feet**, Ps. xviii. 32, 33. **stringed instruments**, Heb. *neginoth*.[b] See titles of Ps. iv., vi.

The Christian's boast (*vv.* 17, 18).—I. The Christian's boast. Though not exempt from the common calamities of life—1. He views God as his God and Saviour; 2. He determines, in the absence of other things, to rejoice in Him. II. The insight which this gives us into the real character of the Christian. 1. It is exalted; 2. Happy; 3. Independent. Address—(1) The careful Christian; (2) The timid Christian; (3) The confident Christian.[c]

Conscious and unconscious testimony.—Daniel Webster was a firm believer in Divine revelation, and a close student of its sacred pages. On one occasion, a small company of select friends spent an evening at his house. Tea over, the Bible, and the relative beauties of its several parts, became the topic of conversation. Each one of the guests had a preference. When the turn came to Webster, he said: "The masterpiece of the New Testament, of course, is the Sermon on the Mount. That has no rival, no equal. As to the Old-Testament writings, my favourite book is that of Habakkuk, and my favourite verses, chapter iii. 17, 18: 'Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines—the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat—the flock shall be cut off, and there shall be no herds in the stall—yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.' This," continued Webster, "I regard as one of the sublimest passages of inspired literature. And often have I wondered that some artist, equal to the task, has not selected the Prophet and his scene of desolation as the subject of a painting. When in Paris, some years ago," continued Webster, "I received an account of a French infidel, who happened to find in a drawer of his library some stray leaves of an unknown volume. Although in the constant habit of denouncing the Bible, like most infidel writers, he had never read any part of it. These fugitive leaves contained the above prayer of Habakkuk. Being a man of fine literary taste, he was captivated with its poetic beauty, and hastened to the club-house, to announce the discovery to his associates. Of course they were anxious to know the name of the gifted author, to which inquiries the elated infidel replied: 'A writer by the name of Hab-ba-kook, of course, a Frenchman!' Judge of the infidel's surprise, when informed that the passage he was so enthusiastically admiring was not produced by one of his own countrymen, nor even by one of his own class of so-called Freethinkers, but was penned

d Beecher.

a "Of the olive it is said, 'The fruit of this tree is indispensable for the comfort, and even the existence of the mass of the community. Almost every kind of dish is cooked in oil, and without it the good wife is utterly confounded; and when the oil fails the lamp in the dwelling of the poor expires."—*Bib. Things.*

b The word "my" strongly confirms the inference drawn from other notices, that Habakkuk was a member of the Levitical choir."—*Spk. Com.*

vv. 17, 18. *Bp. Brownrig*, ii. 237; *Abp. Leighton*, iii. 337; *H. Moir*, 168; *W. Farrington*, 101; *S. Lowell*, 349; *J. Hewlett*, iii. 115; *S. Summers*, 44.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

"The slave of pleasure soon sinks into a kind of voluptuous dotage; intoxicated with present delights, and careless of everything else, his days and his nights glide away in luxury or vice, and he has no care, but to keep thought away: for thought is troublesome to him who lives without his own approbation."—*Johnson.*

by one of God's ancient Prophets, and was contained in that much despised book—the Bible.[d]

Although the fig tree blossom not, O Lord,
And henceforth fruit be found not on the vine,
The labour of the olive fail, the gourd
Be dried and lend no shelter, and the kine
Be taken from the stalls: though at Thy word
The fleecèd flocks be cut from off the fold,
And all our enemies when waxen bold
Should decimate our cities with the sword;
Though the fair fields of happy Israel
Be wither'd in Thy glance, and yield no meat:
Though in Thy temples rude unholy feet
Tread down the altars we have loved so well:
Though powers and kingdoms fall beneath Thy rod,
Yet shall I safely dwell with Thee, my God![e]

Contentment.—It was an excellent speech of Luther concerning worldly things: "I have protested that I will never be satisfied with the creature" (this is to be a Protestant in deed as well as in truth). A godly man is an epicure in Christ; he would never play the epicure but in Christ and in God. In them, and towards them, he gives his affections their full swing, and as a wicked man is said "to enlarge his desires" (after the earth) "as hell" (Hab. ii. 5); so he enlarges "his desires" (after heaven) as heaven, and complains his desires are no larger. In the thoughts of Christ he sits down, and would take his fill; he saith, "I am safe in Him, I am quiet and at rest;" he saith to his soul, "Soul, dost thou see that Christ, and dost thou take notice of those promises? Thou hast good laid up in Him, in them, for many years, yea, for eternity; soul, take thine ease, take it fully, thou hast riches, thou hast an estate that can never be spent; soul, eat, drink, and be merry: His blood is drink indeed, and His flesh is meat indeed; joy in Christ is joy indeed, unspeakable joy here, and fulness of joy hereafter; in His presence there is fulness of joy, and at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Until the soul pitches thus on Christ, it is not in safety, much less in rest or quiet. As the needle in the compass is in continual motion till it points towards the north, where (as it is conceived) there are rocks of loadstone, with which it sympathiseth, so the soul is in continual motion until it points to Christ, who (we are sure) is that living Rock with whom all believers sympathise, and the true Loadstone which attracts all believers to Him. A believer, like Noah's dove, finds no rest all the world over for the feet of his soul until he returns to the ark of safety and salvation. And therefore, after all His flights and flutterings among the creatures, he saith with the Psalmist, "Return unto thy rest (thy Christ), O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee," Psal. cxvi. 9.[f]

d Lutheran Observer.

e Geo. Smith.

"As for a little more money and a little more time, why it's ten to one if either one or the other would make you a whit happier. If you had more time, it would be sure to hang heavily. It is the working man is the happy man. Man was made to be active, and he is never so happy as when he is so. It is the idle man is the miserable man. What comes of holidays, and far too often of sight-seeing, but evil? Half the harm that happens is on those days. And as for money—don't you remember the old saying, 'Enough is as good as a feast?' Money never made a man happy yet, nor will it. There is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more a man has the more he wants. Instead of its filling a vacuum, it makes one. If it satisfies one want, it doubles and trebles that want another way. That was a true proverb of the wise man, rely upon it: 'Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith.'"—*Franklin.*

f Caryl.

ZEPHANIAH

Introduction.

I. Author. ZEPHANIAH, = "*Jehovah hides.*" Nothing more known of him than can be gathered from his book, where four generations of his ancestors are enumerated (i. 1), and among them the name of Hizkiah, identical with the name of Hezekiah, king of Judah. It is probable that it was from this sovereign Zephaniah was descended, and the fact may explain the unusual length of the pedigree. II. Time. B.C. 628—620. Since Nineveh fell B.C. 625, that portion of his prophecy which relates to the subversion of the Assyrian empire must have been delivered before that date. III. Theme. He denounced the judgments of God against Judah, and the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Ethiopians, and Assyrians; he predicted the Babylonish captivity, in consequence of the sins of Judah; the restoration of the Jews; and the future glory of the Church. IV. Style. The style of this Prophet is dignified and energetic, yet not remarkable; he has the poetic power, but of no high degree. He occasionally uses paronomasia, and has in several places adopted and repeated the utterances of other Prophets. (Comp. i. 7 with Isa. xxxiv. 6; and ii. 13—15 with Isa. xiii. 21, 22, xxxiv. 13—15; and i. 14, 15 with Joel ii. 1, 2; and i. 13 with Amos v. 11.)

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

SECTION I. A denunciation against Judah for their idolatry ..... i.

SECTION II. Repentance the only means to avert the Divine vengeance ..... ii, 1—3

SECTION III. Prophecies against the Philistines ..... ii. 4—7

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And Nineveh ..... 13—15

SECTION IV. The captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians foretold ..... iii. 1—7

Together with their future restoration and the ultimate prosperous state of the Church ..... 8—20

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) **Zephaniah,** meaning "Whom the Lord covers," in times of storm and distress.[a] **Hizkiah,** the same as Hezekiah, and poss. the good king of that name. **days . . Judah,** the guilt of the people was aggravated by their failing to accept the reformation of the good Josiah. (2) **utterly consume,** *marg.* "by taking away I will make an end."[b] (3) **man and beast,** *etc.*, the creatures, esp. the domestic creatures, sharing the judgments brought on man.[c] **stumblingblocks,** or idols.[d]

God irresistible.—As you stood some stormy day upon a sea-cliff, and marked the giant billow rise from the deep to rush on with foaming crest, and throw itself thundering on the trembling shore, did you ever fancy that you could stay its course, and hurl it back to the depths of ocean? Did you ever stand beneath the leaden lowering cloud, and mark the lightning's leap, as it shot and flashed, dazzling, athwart the gloom, and think that you could grasp the bolt and change its path? Still more foolish and vain his thought who fancies that he can arrest or turn aside the purpose of God, saying, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? Let us break His bands asunder, and cast away His cords from us." Break His bands asunder! How He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh![e]

4—6. (4) **stretch . . hand,** the phrase indicating the execution of threatened judgments. **Judah,** previously to this, the ten tribes had been carried away captive. **remnant of Baal,** the altars wh. may have been spared in the time of Josiah's reformation.[a] **Chemarims,** idol-priests.[b] **with the priests,** *i.e.* the unfaithful priests of Jehovah. (5) **house-tops,** chosen for worship-places, bec. in full view of the heavenly bodies.[c] **by the Lord,** better, *to* Jehovah, and yet, with strange inconsistency, swear also to Malcham, or Moloch, or the word may be trans. "your king," and then it may be referred to Baal. (6) **turned back,** in apostasy.[d]

God contending with the believer (*v.* 5).—I. There are some of thy graces which would never be discovered if it were not for thy trials. II. Real growth in grace is the result of sanctified trials. Improve:—The Lord both brings out graces and makes them grow.[e]

7—10. (7) **hold thy peace,** Heb. *Hush!*[a] **day,** *etc.*, the expression usually signifies God's time of judgment. **sacrifice,** the wicked Jewish people, who are now to be offered up. **guests,** fig. for the Chaldæan invaders.[b] (8) **punish,** lit. *visit upon.* **strange apparel,** prob. garments associated with the worship of particular idol forms.[c] (9) **leap,** *etc.*,[d] prob. referring to deeds of violence and robbery. Am. iii. 10; Je. v. 27. (10) **fish gate,** 2 Chr. xxxiii. 14; Ne. iii. 3, xii. 39. Situated on the E. of the lower city, N. of the sheep gate.[e] **second gate,** or middle part of the city. **hills,** Zion and Moriah.

Strange apparel (*v.* 8).—"Those that wear strange apparel." These are words that in this connection seem to mean only the rich that were conscious of such power and influence as to dare in time of oppression and danger to avow their riches, and who

a Gesenius.

b Je. viii. 13.

c Ro. viii. 20—22.

d Eze. vii. 19, xiv. 3, 4.

"To know the pains of power, we must go to those who have it; to know its pleasures, we must go to those who are seeking it; the pains of power are real, its pleasures imaginary."—*C. Colton.*

e Dr. Guthrie.

a "The remains of Baal worship, which as yet Josiah was unable utterly to eradicate in remoter places. Baal was the Phœnician tutelary god."—*Fausset.*

b 2 Ki. xxiii. 5.

c 2 Ki. xxii. 6, 12; Je. xix. 13, xxxii. 29.

d Je. ii. 13, 17.

e C. H. Spurgeon.

a Ha. ii. 20; Zec. ii. 13.

b "The illus. is drawn from those sacrifices in wh. the offerer invited his friends to share the flesh of the victim, see 1 Sa. ix. 12, 13."—*Spk. Com.*

c "So, in after-times, there were peculiar habits

belonging to the priests of Saturn and priestesses of Ceres, which are mentioned in the martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas."—*Lowth.*

d "'Leap *over* the threshold:' in imitation of the Philistine custom of not treading on the threshold. 1 Sa. v. 5."—*Rosenmüller.*

e Maurer.

v. 8. *N. Alsop.*

f Harmer.

therefore were not afraid to wear the precious manufactures of strange countries, though they were neither magistrates, nor yet of royal descent. A great number of attendants is a modern piece of Oriental magnificence; as I shall hereafter have occasion to remark, it appears to have been so anciently, Eccles. v. 11; these servants, now, it is most certain, frequently attend their master on horseback, richly attired, sometimes to the number of twenty-five or thirty: if they did so anciently, with a number of servants attending great men, who are represented by this very Prophet as at that time in common terrible oppressors, ch. iii. 3, they may be naturally supposed to ride into people's houses, and having gained admission by deceit, to force from them by violence considerable contributions: for this riding into houses is not now only practised by the Arabs; it consequently might be practised by others, too, anciently. It is not now peculiar to the Arabs, for Le Bruyn, after describing the magnificent furniture of several of the Armenian merchants at Julfa, that suburb of Ispahan in which they live, tells us, that the front door of the greatest part of these houses is very small, partly to hinder the Persians from entering into them on horseback, and partly that they may less observe the magnificence within. To which ought to be added, what he elsewhere observes, that these Armenians are treated with great rigour and insolence by the Persians. If this text refers to a violence of this sort, they are the thresholds of the oppressed over which they leaped, not the thresholds of the oppressive masters, which some have supposed, when they returned laden with spoil.*f*

11—13. (11) **Maktesh,** poss. a part, or street, of Jerusalem. The word means *the mortar,* and may be applied to the Valley of Siloam fr. its hollow shape.*a* **merchant people,** or people of Canaan.*b* (12) **search . . candles,** this was fulfilled in the sack of the city by the Chaldæans. **settled . . lees,** marg. *curdled, crusted, thickened.*c **good . . evil,** *i.e.* He does not concern Himself about us. (13) **therefore,** *etc.,* comp. threatening, De. xxviii. 30, 39.*d*

Men at ease (*v.* 12).—I. The persons described. 1. The careless; 2. The sceptical. II. The judgments threatened against them. 1. They shall be discovered; 2. They shall be punished. Apply:—(1) Beware of carnal security; (2) Of practical atheism; (3) Of thinking yourselves guilty of either without sufficient cause.*e*

Settled on their lees (*v.* 12).—The margin has, in place of "settled," "curdled or thickened." The Tamul translation has this, "dregs stirred up," *i.e.* sediment shaken together well thickened. Of people who are in great straits, of those who are a strange compound of good and evil, of things which are difficult to understand, it is said, "Ah! this is all *kullumbinvandal*," *i.e.* stirred up dregs. This appears to have been the state of the Jews, and they wanted to show that the Lord would neither do good nor evil; that in Him was not any distinct character; and that He would not regard them in their thickened and mixed condition; that though they were joined to the heathen, it was not of any consequence. "I will search Jerusalem with candles;" thus were they mistaken in their false hopes. Does a man declare his innocence of any crime, the accusers say, "We will search thee with lamps." "Yes, yes, I will look into

a Jerome.

b Ho. xii. 7.

"Those whose souls were engrossed in buying and selling, and getting money, had forfeited the honoured name of Israel, and deserved to be called by the name of the original inhabitants, whom they closely resembled."—*Spk. Com.*

c "Image from the crust formed at the bottom of wines long left undisturbed."—*Fausset.*

d Am. v. 11.

v. 12. *S. Davies,* iii. 272; *Dr. G. Croft,* ii. 209; *C. Chais,* ii. 215; *H. Blunt,* i. 187.

e G. Brooks.

that affair with lamps." "What! have your lamps gone out? You see I am not guilty."[f]—*The tallow tree.*—The tallow tree of China, which gives rise to a vast trade in the northern parts of that empire, has been introduced into India. It grows with great luxuriance in the Dhoous, and in the Kohistan of the North-Western Provinces, and the Punjaub, and there are now ten thousand of the trees in the government plantations of Kowlaghis, Hawal Baugh, and Ayar Tolic, from which tons of seeds are available for distribution. Dr. Jameson prepared from the seeds 100 lbs. of tallow, and forwarded 50 lbs. to the Punjaub Railway, in order to have its properties as a lubricator for railway machinery tested. For burning, the tallow is excellent; it gives a clear, bright, inodorous flame, and is without smoke. The tree fruits abundantly, both in the Dhoous and in the plains, and grows with great rapidity; many trees raised from seeds, introduced eight years ago, being now six feet in circumference, and three feet from the ground. The timber is white and close-grained, and well fitted for printing blocks. The leaves are valuable as a dye.

[f] *Roberts.*

"There is no keeping back the power we have. He hath no power who hath not power to use."—*Bailey.*

"Let him that would be at quiet take heed not to provoke men in power."—*Seneca.*

14—16. (14) **hasteth**, seems, to the Prophet, to be hurrying swiftly.[a] **cry**, or shriek. (15) **wrath**, Je. xxx. 7; Joel ii. 11. (16) **trumpet**, or signal of war. **alarm**, or war-shout.

[a] Joel ii. 1, 11; Ro. xiii. 12; He. x. 37; Re. xxii. 20.

Omniscience, etc., of God.—

There is an Eye that never sleeps
Beneath the wing of night;
There is an Ear that never shuts
When sink the beams of light.

There is an Arm that never tires
When human strength gives way;
There is a Love that never fails
When earthly loves decay.

That Eye is fix'd on seraph throngs;
That Ear is fill'd with angel's songs;
That Arm upholds the worlds on high;
That Love is throned beyond the sky.

vv. 14—16. *G. W. Woodhouse*, i. 185.

"Never was known a night of such distraction! Noise so confused and dreadful; justling crowds that run, and know not whither; torches gliding like meteors by each other in the streets."—*Dryden.*

17, 18. (17) **bring distress**, *comp.* De. xxviii. 52. **like blind**, in utter and hopeless bewilderment. **dust . . dung**, refuse and worthless things. (18) **neither**, *etc.*, Pr. xi. 4; Eze. vii. 19. **speedy riddance**, *lit.* "a destruction, and that awfully sudden."[a]

[a] *Calvin.*

"Let not sinners be laid asleep by the patience of God, for when the measure of their iniquity is full, His justice will both overtake and overcome, will make quick work and thorough work."—*Mat. Henry.*

"Power! 'tis the favourite attribute of gods, who look with smiles on men, who can aspire to copy them."—*Martyn.*

"Power shows the man."—*Pittachus.*

The greatness of God.—

A million torches, lighted by Thy hand,
Wander unwearied through the blue abyss;
They own Thy power, accomplish Thy command,
All gay with life, all eloquent with bliss;
What shall we call them? Piles of crystal light?
A glorious company of golden streams?
Lamps of celestial ether, burning bright?
Suns, lighting systems with their joyous beams?
But Thou to these art as the noon to night!

Yes! as a drop of water in the sea,
All this magnificence in Thee is lost.
What are ten thousand worlds compared to Thee?
And what am I, then? Heaven's unnumber'd host,

Though multiplied by myriads, and array'd
In all the glory of sublimest thought,
Is but an atom, in the balance weigh'd
Against Thy greatness,—is a cypher brought
Against infinity! What am I? Nought!

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—3. (1) **not desired,** or having no desires; sinfully satisfied with your present condition: unwilling to be instructed and urged to seek after better things.[a] (2) **as the chaff,** *i.e.* as the chaff flies before the wind. Omit the word *before*. (3) **meek,** or pious, humble souls.[b] **hid,**[c] so as to be preserved in the time of judgment and calamity. Such preservation, however, cannot be absolutely assured. Oftentimes the righteous have to share national troubles with the wicked.

Repentance urged (*vv.* 1—3).—1. The most dreadful judgments hang over an unbelieving world; 2. To escape those judgments should be the concern of every living man; 3. To those who have any measure of humility and contrition this truth will approve itself as most unquestionable and most important; 4. But let your humiliation be such as God requires; 5. It will then prove effectual for the salvation of your souls.[d]

Comfort in trouble.—If you would rejoice in the Lord in trouble, you must maintain the same holy elevation in prosperity. Endeavour constantly to realise the control He exercises over human affairs. Strive to keep your evidence of interest in the God of salvation as unclouded and bright as possible, so that if calamities should overtake you, you have not to ascertain the fact of your being a child of God. Never forget that trials do not injuriously affect your best interests, and that, however severe, they will have a joyful issue. Look through all your mercies to God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and it will not then be difficult for you to see your Heavenly Father through the darkness which affliction may create.[e]

4—7. (4) **Gaza,** *etc.*, the principal cities of the Philistine plain.[a] (5) **Cherethites,** 1 Sa. xxx. 14. **Canaan,** wh. included Philistia. (6) **shepherds . . flocks,** the sure sign of a desolate and uninhabited district. (7) **remnant,**[b] those restored fr. captivity. They did pasture their flocks in this seacoast region.

Ascalon.—The site of Ascalon is in form like an old Roman theatre,—the sea in front, and the ground once occupied by the city rising gradually and uniformly to the wall, which runs in a semicircle from shore to shore. Not a house, not a fragment of a house, remains standing. Not a foundation of temple or palace can be traced entire. One half of it is occupied by miniature fields, and vineyards, and fig orchards; rubbish-mounds here and there among them, and great heaps of hewn stones, and broken shafts, and sculptured slabs of granite and marble. The rude fences exhibit similar painful evidences of ancient wealth and magnificence. The other half of the site was still more fearfully desolate. It is so thickly covered with drift sand, that not a heap of rubbish, not a vestige of ruin, remains visible, save here and there where the top of a column rises like a tombstone above the smooth surface. The sand is fast advancing; it has already

a "Or, 'O nation not ashamed,' lost to all sense of shame, and therefore unwilling to receive correction, and incapable of amendment."—*Wordsworth.*

b Mat. v. 5.

c Ps. xxvii. 5.

vv. 1, 2. *W. Perkins*, iii. 411; *J. Dupre*, 207; *J. H. B. Mountain*, 49.

v. 3. *W. Bridge*, iv. 346.

d *C. Simeon, M.A.*

e *Samuel Summers*, 1820.

a This prophecy has been literally fulfilled; scarcely a trace of these once flourishing cities is now left. b Hag. i 12, ii. 2. Power is expressed in art by the luminous nebula supposed to emanate fr. and surround the divine essence. It was derived from the heathen, who decorated the images of their gods with a crown of rays. The glory is sometimes cruciform, again triangular, and, at other times, circular.

covered some of the highest fragments of the southern and western wall, and ere a quarter of a century has passed, the site of Ascalon will have been blotted out for ever.[c]

8—11. **reproach . . Ammon,**[a] the neighbouring nations, wh. had long manifested bitter enmity against the Jews. (9) **as Sodom,** the type of utter and overwhelming destruction. **nettles,**[b] the growth of waste places. (10) **this,** overwhelming judgment, comp. Is. xv. 6 · Je. xlviii. 29. (11) **famish,** *etc.*, by depriving them of their worship, offerings, and worshippers. **worship him,** *i.e.* Jehovah.

Favour of God.—What a prodigy of favour is it to us that He hath passed by so many forms of His creatures, and hath not set us down in the rank of any of them, till we come to be *paulo minores angelis*, "a little lower than the angels!" and yet from the meanest of them God can perfect His own praise. The deeps and the snows, the hail and the rain, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea, they can and do glorify God, and give Him praise in their capacity; and yet He gave them no reason, no immortal spirit, or capacity of eternal blessedness; but He hath distinguished us from them by the absolute issues of His predestination, and hath given us a lasting and eternal spirit, excellent organs of perception, and wonderful instruments of expression, that we may join in concert with the morning star, and bear a part in the chorus with the angels of light, to sing hallelujah to the great Father of men and angels.[c]

12—15 (12) **Ethiopians,** Ge. x. 6; allies of the Egyptians. These were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar. (13) **Assyria,** the earlier kingdom, whose capital was Nineveh, and which Babylon conquered and absorbed.[a] (14) **cormorant,** or *pelican*. Ps. cii. 6. **bittern,** perhaps *hedgehog*.[b] **upper lintels,** or capitals of her columns. **uncover . . work,** laying bare the roofs as the palaces dropped into ruins. (15) **carelessly,** heedless of all warnings, Is. xlvii. 8. **I am,** *etc.*, this is the expression of the pride and self-satisfaction of Nineveh. **hiss,** *etc.*, Na. iii. 19.

Upper lintels.—Margin, "knobs or chapiters." Chardin, describing the magnificent pillars that he found at Persepolis, tells us that the storks (birds respected by the Persians) make their nests on the tops of these columns with great boldness, and are in no danger of being dispossessed.[c]

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—4. (1) **her,** *i.e.* Jerusalem, wh. at the time was filled with the sins of luxury and cruelty. (2) **the voice,** of gracious warning. (3) **roaring lions,** resembling such in their violent dealings with the people. **evening wolves,** fiercely ravening for their prey.[a] **gnaw . . morrow,** *i.e.* they leave nothing for the morrow. (4) **light,** reckless, unprincipled.[b] **violence . . law,** Eze. xxii. 26.

Four sins of omission (*v.* 2).—I. Disobedience. II. Misimprovement of affliction. III. Unbelief. IV. Neglect of prayer. Apply:—1. Repent of these sins: 2. Forsake them.[c]

Special need of watchfulness.—When cast by Providence among sinful persons who respect us, we ought to be peculiarly watchful.

c Dr. Porter.

a For prophecies against Moab, see Nu. xxiv. 17; Is. xv., xvi.; Am. ii. 1—3; Je. xlviii.

For prophecies against Ammon, see Am. i. 13—15; Je. xlix.; Eze. xxv. 1-7.

b Poss. it designates the prickly acanthus, a very common and troublesome weed,.. abundant among ruins."—*Tristram.*

v. 11. *R. Polwhele,* i. 110.

c Bp. Taylor.

a Nineveh was destroyed by Cyaxares and Nabopolassar, 625 B.C.

b "A bird somewhat smaller than a heron, of solitary habits, and frequenting marshy lands (*Botaurus stellaris*). It is a bird of the wilds, almost a bird of desolation, avoiding alike the neighbourhood of man and the progress of man's improvements."—*Bib. Things.*

c Burder.

a Ha. i. 8.

b "They were so given to bantering, that it was hard to say when they were serious." — *Matt. Henry.*

v. 4. *P. Henry,* 228

c G. Brooks.

"Sins of commission are usual punishments for

sins of omission. He that leaves a duty may fear to be left to commit a crime."—*Gurnall.* "We may lose heaven by neutrality as well as by hostility, by wanting oil as well as by drinking poison. An unprofitable servant shall as much be punished as a prodigal son. Undone duty will undo our souls."—*Boves.* The last words of the industrious Archbishop Usher were, "Lord, in special, forgive me my sins of omission."

d Spurgeon.

a "The morning is the usual time in the sultry East for dispensing justice."—*Fausset.*

b "God rose up early, to send them His Prophets, to reduce and reclaim them, but they were up before Him, to shut and bolt the door against Him." *Mat. Henry.*

v. 7. *J. S. Vereda*, i. 188.

c C. Simeon, M.A.

"Never put much confidence in such as put no confidence in others. A man prone to suspect evil is mostly looking in his neighbour for what he sees in himself. As to the pure all things are pure, even so to the impure all things are impure."—*J. C. Hare.*

v. 8. *J. H. B. Mountain*, 174.

The hatred of the ungodly, when poured upon Christians in the form of persecution, is seldom harmful to their spiritual nature, but the friendship of the world is always to be suspected. When the servants of the high priest allowed Peter to warm his hands at the fire, had Peter been a wise man, he would have been afraid that evil would come of it. We are disarmed by kindness, but it is never safe to be disarmed in an enemy's country. "Who," says the old proverb, "could live in Rome and yet be at war with the pope?" Who can have much to do with sinners and not have something to do with their sins? The smiling daughters of Moab did more mischief to Israel than all Balak's frowning warriors. All Philistia could not have blinded Samson if Delilah's charms had not deluded him. Our worst foes will be found among our ungodly *friends*. Those who are false to God, are not likely to be true to us. Walk carefully, believer, if thy way lie by the sinner's door, and especially if that sinner hath acted a friendly part to thee.*d*

5—7. (5) just Lord, *comp.* De. xxxii. 4. every morning, or "morning by morning."*a* The fact that God was in the midst of them, witnessing against their wrongdoings, aggravated their iniquity. no shame, on account of his sin. (6) towers, marg. *corners*. (7) rose early, the usual sign of doing things earnestly.*b*

Effect of neglecting God (*vv.* 7, 8).—I. What God has been expecting of us. 1. There have been judgments of God on surrounding nations; 2. God has been speaking to us by these events. II. How we have disappointed His expectations. 1. Hear the accusation of God against us; 2. The accusation is applicable to all. III. What we may expect from Him—1. In a way of judgment; 2. In a way of mercy.*c*

Constant watchcare of God.—A little boy was running about in an apartment, amusing himself, as children are accustomed to do. His money was potsherds, his house bits of wood, his horse a stick, and his child a doll. In the same apartment sat his father, at a table, occupied with important matters of business, which he noted and arranged for the future benefit of his young companion. The child frequently ran to him, asked many foolish questions, and begged one thing after another as necessary for his diversion. The father answered briefly, did not intermit his work, but, all the time, kept a watchful eye over the child, to save him from any serious fall or injury. Gotthold was a spectator of the scene, and thought with himself: "How beautiful an adumbration of the fatherly care of God! We too, who are old children, course about in the world, and often play at games which are much more foolish than those of our little ones: we collect and scatter, build and demolish, plant and pluck up, ride and drive, eat and drink, sing and play, and fancy that we are performing great exploits, well worthy of God's special attention. Meanwhile, however, the Omniscient is sitting by, and writing our days in His book. He orders and executes all that is to befall us, overruling it for our best interests in time and eternity; and yet His eye never ceases to watch over us and the childish sports in which we are engaged, that we may meet with no deadly mischief."

8—10. (8) fire . . jealousy, ch. i. 18. (9) pure language,

or *lip*. They shall sincerely take upon their lips the name of Jehovah. **one consent**, lit. *one shoulder*: "as of men helping one another to support a heavy load."[a] (10) **my suppliants**,[b] those who seek My favour. Lit. "burners of incense."

Not what I want now.—When Archbishop Secker was laid on his dying bed, his friend Mr. Talbot came to see him. He felt it was their last meeting together, so he said, "You will pray with me, Talbot, before you go away?" Mr. Talbot rose, and went to look for a prayer-book. "That is not what I want now," said the dying prelate; "kneel down by me and pray for me in the way I know you are used to do." So the good man knelt by his friend's bedside, and poured out his soul for him before his heavenly Father in such words as his heart dictated. The Holy Spirit blessed them to the comfort of the dying man. There was a life and spirit in them that he could not find in forms, however excellent. When we come to that solemn hour we shall want something more than a formal religion. It may have satisfied us very well before, but it will give us no light for the dark valley. "God be merciful to me a sinner," will have more meaning to us than a volume of the most "beautiful prayers," pronounced with the most faultless elocution.

[a] *Spk. Com.*

[b] Is. lx. 4, 9. lxvi. 20.

"The confidence we have in ourselves creates a great part of that trust which we have in others. The greatest part of our confidence proceeds from a desire either to be pitied or admired." — *Beaumont.*

11—13. (11) **shalt thou not**, an appeal.[a] Will not My very mercy bow you down in sincere humiliations? (12) **leave**, *etc.*, this will be the remnant left in the land as not thought worth removal to Babylon. (13) **do iniquity**, with special reference to idolatry, and the moral evils accompanying idolatrous worship.

The poor living by faith (*v.* 12).—I. Their low condition. 1. Their relative and temporal state; 2. Their personal and spiritual state; 3. Their state to which they are reduced by the Gospel. II. Their exalted privilege. It is their privilege to trust in— 1. His mercy to pardon; 2. His power to uphold; 3. His love to overrule everything for their good; 4. His faithfulness to keep them to the end. Apply:—(1) Let it not be a grief to any that they are afflicted and poor; (2) Let the religion of the heart be more and more cultivated.[b]

[a] Je. xxxi. 19; Ro. vi. 21.

v. 12. *Dr. R. Sibbs*, i. 347.

"What is public history but a register of the successes and disappointments, the vices, the follies, and the quarrels of those who engage in contention for power?"—*Paley.*

[b] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

14, 15. (14) **daughter of Zion**, Is. xii. 6, liv. 1. "Such hymns of joy properly belong to the times of the Gospel."[a] (15) **taken away**, removed them, bec. their end was sufficiently accomplished. **the king**, the only true King. "The prophecy of the perpetual Divine presence is fulfilled in God the Son, Emmanuel, God with us."[b]

Power of communion with God.—In driving piles, a machine is used by which a huge weight is lifted up and then made to fall upon the head of the pile. Of course the higher the weight is lifted the more powerful is the blow which it gives when it descends. Now, if we would tell upon our age and come down upon society with ponderous blows, we must see to it that we are uplifted as near to God as possible. All our power will depend upon the elevation of our spirits. Prayer, meditation, devotion, communion, are like a windlass to wind us up aloft; it is not lost time which we spend in such sacred exercises, for we are thus accumulating force, so that when we come down to our actual labour for God we shall descend with an energy unknown to those to whom communion is unknown.[c]

[a] *Lowth.*

[b] *Wordsworth.*

"Prayer sanctifies all our actions. When the mind in the morning opens to God, as the eye to the sun's clear light, by the radiance of the Divine beams we become enlightened inwardly all the day."—*Feltham.*

[c] *Spurgeon.*

16, 17. (16) **slack**, or *faint*.[a] This is gracious comforting for the feeble-minded and timid. (17) **rejoice over thee**, in having now the opportunity of doing thee good. **rest**, or take satisfaction in.

The presence of God (*v.* 17).—I. God resides among His people —1. Under the Jewish dispensation; 2. In the Christian Church. II. God delivers His people. 1. His power; 2. His work. III. God delights in His people. 1. It is heartfelt; 2. Permanent; 3. Avowed. Apply:—(1) The presence of God is the glory of His people; (2) The safety of His people; (3) The delight of God is the bliss of His people.[b]

18—20. (18) **solemn assembly**,[a] a time of holy gladness, with wh. they should be greatly cheered. **of thee**, *i.e.* of thy true citizens. **the reproach**, of being under Divine judgments, and in bitter captivity. (19) **halteth**, Mi. iv. 7. (20) **turn back**, or bring you back from your captivity.[b]

An important assembly (*v.* 18).—I. The assembly of the Jews, of Christians. 1. The day, the Sabbath; 2. The object, worship, instruction; 3. The Spirit. II. The sorrow, sorrowful. 1. When we are obliged to be absent from it; 2. When it is poorly attended; 3. When it is little improved; 4. When it is impoverished and declining; 5. When it is dishonoured and degraded. III. The promise in reference to both Jews and Christians. 1. Gathering them for safety; 2. For glory. Apply:—(1) Sensibility attends genuine religion; (2) Nothing is more pleasing to God than concern for the welfare of Zion.[c]

Communion with God.—

Like the low murmur of the secret stream,
Which through dark alders winds its shaded way,
My suppliant voice is heard: Ah! do not deem
That on vain toys I throw my hours away.

In the recesses of the forest vale,
On the wild mountain, on the verdant sod,
Where the fresh breezes of the morn prevail,
I wander lonely, communing with God.

When the faint sickness of a wounded heart
Creeps in cold shudderings through my sinking frame,
I turn to Thee,—that holy peace impart,
Which soothes the invokers of Thy awful name!

O all-pervading Spirit! sacred Beam!
Parent of Life and Light! Eternal Power!
Grant me through obvious clouds one transient gleam
Of Thy bright essence in my dying hour![d]

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a He. xii. 12; Is. xxxv. 3, 4.

vv. 16, 17. *Dr. E. Payson*, i. 587.

b G. Brooks.

a La. i. 7, ii. 6; Ps. xlii. 3, 10.

b Is xi. 12, xxvii. 12, lvi. 8; Eze. xxxiv. 13, xxxvii. 21; Am. ix. 14.

v. 18. *W. Bridge*, iii. 407.

c G. Brooks.

"Though in the old Jewish law the priest did not continually offer sacrifices unto the Lord, yet fire was continually burning upon the altar, and never went out. So, though we do not continually offer to God 'the calves of our lips,' yet the fire of devotion and spiritual fervency must be continually burning in our hearts, and never go out. And this is the true meaning of the Apostle's exhortation—'Pray without ceasing;' not pray continually with the tongue, as though that should never lie still; but pray without ceasing, meaning with that part which doth indeed never lie still, except we be still—and that is the heart."—*Sir Richard Baker.*

d [illegible]

HAGGAI.

Introduction.

I. Author. HAGGAI, = "*festive.*" The first of the Prophets who prophesied after the captivity, said to have been born in Babylon, and to have returned to Judæa with Zerubbabel, and that he died there and was buried among the priests. It is said, too, that he was a priest himself, and that he was a member of what is called the Great Synagogue. But all this is matter of tradition. **II. Time.** B.C. 520 to ab. 518. Ewald is inclined to believe that Haggai had seen the second temple; if so, he must have lived to an advanced age; for his prophecy is dated the second year of Darius (son of Hystaspes), sixty-eight years after the destruction of the temple of Solomon. **III. Style.** Prosaic, but parallelisms occasionally appear (see i. 6, 9, 10, ii. 6, 8, 22). He frequently introduces interrogatories (as in i. 4, 9, ii. 3, 12, 13, 19). It may be added that "the desire of all nations" (ii. 7) cannot directly apply to Christ; it should rather be rendered "the choice of all nations." All shall be shaken, or fear; but the choicest, the best, shall come to give honour to God. It is not denied that this has its full accomplishment in Messianic times. **IV. Theme.** Haggai was commissioned to stir up the flagging zeal of the people, informing them that the unproductive seasons which they had experienced were the punishment of their negligence, and assuring them that the second temple, far from being inferior to that of Solomon, should exceed it in glory.—*Litton.*

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

DISCOURSE I. The people reproved for delay in building the temple; and told that their neglect has resulted in bad seasons i. 1—12

They are encouraged to undertake the work, and promised Divine assistance....13—15

DISCOURSE II. The builders are promised that the glory of the second temple should surpass that of the first—this prophecy was fulfilled by Jesus Christ honouring the second temple with His presence, and there publishing His saving doctrine to the world (see Luke xix. 47, xx. 1, xxi. 38; John xviii. 20); and that the harvest of the following year should be good..ii. 1—19

DISCOURSE III. The setting up of Messiah's kingdom under the name of Zerubbabel foretold.....ii. 20—23

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1, 2. (1) **Darius**, prob. Darius Hystaspes.[a] **sixth month**, according to the *Heb.* reckoning; the month *Elul.* **Haggai**, meaning, *my feast:* poss. given to him in joyous anticipation of the return from exile.[b] **Zerubbabel**, *comp.* Ezr. i. 8, iii. 8. (2) **this people**, bec. of their sinful state of mind God does not address them as *My* people. **not come**, they excused themselves on the ground that they had not received the encouragement and protection of the Persian king.[c]

Duty urged (*vv.* 1, 2).—I. Duty is the burden of Divine revelation. II. Duty is increased by social elevation. III. Duty is postponed by depraved man. IV. Duty is vindicated by Divine government.[d]

The house of God.—You have all got into the habit of calling the church the "house of God." I have seen over the doors of many churches the legend actually carved, "This is the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Now, note where that legend comes from, and of what place it was first spoken. A boy leaves his father's house to go on a long journey on foot, to visit his uncle; he has to cross a wild hill desert; just as if one of your own boys had to cross the wilds of Westmoreland, to visit an uncle at Carlisle. The second or third day your boy finds himself somewhere between Hawes and Brough, in the midst of the moors, at sunset. It is stony ground, and boggy; he cannot go one foot further that night. Down he lies to sleep on Wharnside where best he may, gathering a few of the stones together to put under his head—so wild the place is he cannot get anything but stones. And there, lying under the broad night, he has a dream; and he sees a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reaches to heaven, and the angels of God are ascending and descending upon it. And when he wakes out of his sleep, he says, "How dreadful is this place: surely, this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." This place, observe; not this church; not this city; not this stone even, which he puts up for a memorial—the piece of flint on which his head has lain. But this place; this windy slope of Wharnside; this moorland hollow, torrent-bitten, snow-blighted; this any place where God lets down the ladder. And how are you to know where that will be? or how are you to determine where it may be, but by being ready for it always? Do you know where the lightning is to fall next? You do know that, partly: you can guide the lightning; but you cannot guide the going forth of the Spirit, which is as the lightning when it shines from the east to the west. But the perpetual and insolent warping of that strong verse to serve a merely ecclesiastical purpose, is only one of the thousand instances in which we sink back into gross Judaism.

3—6. (3) **then**, in special application to this sinful negligence. (4) **you, O ye**, "the repetition of the pronoun is emphatic." **ceiled**, or wainscoted, a favourite form of ornamentation.[a] **this house**, the temple of Jehovah. (5) **consider**, set your heart on; wisely estimate your past and present

a Ezr. iv. 5, 24. "Darius was a common name of the Persian kings, as Pharaoh of those of Egypt, and Cæsar of those of Rome."—*Fausset.*

b Cocceius.

c "The temple began to be rebuilt in the year B.C. 535. But in consequence of opposition from without, and the failure of faith and courage within, the work of building the temple was intermitted for fifteen years."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 2. *A. Fuller*, 550.

d Dr. Thomas. Christians in Greenland very seldom, if ever, absent themselves from public worship on account of the weather. When it is so cold that their breath freezes and forms icicles on their faces, they yet go long distances—men, women, and children—through snow and ice, storm, &c., to the house of prayer. Through much greater sacrifice than the Christians of more favoured lands do the poor Greenlanders obey the injunction not to forsake the assembling of themselves together.

a "It argues a great contempt of God and religion, when men think no

cost or cheery too much to bestow upon themselves, and the meanest accommodation good enough for the service of God."—*Lowth.*

"The chief ornament of a room on which the chief expense is laid out, is the ceiling. The favourite ceiling is made of wood, carved in intricate and graceful arabesque figures painted in brilliant, gorgeous colours, and sometimes extremely beautiful. A favourite colour for ceilings in Asia Minor, and one of the most enduring, is vermilion."—*Van Lennep.*

vv. 2—4. *Bp. Jewell*, ii. 986; *J. C. Hare*, ii. 1.

vv. 3, 4. *H. Melvill*, 148.

v. 5. *Dr. J. Edwards*, iii. 365; *Abp. Secker*, vii. 1; *R. Southgate*, i. 142.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

c Spurgeon.

d Cawdray.

a Ezr. iii. 7.

vv. 5—11. *J. C. Hare*, ii. 23.

v. 7. *N. Brady*, i. 393; *Dr. J. Foster*, iv. 227; *W. Langhorne*, i. 73.

vv. 7, 8. *J. C. Hare*, ii. 47.

v. 8. *Abp. Sumner*, 208.

b G. Brooks.

conduct. (6) sown, *etc.*, Le. xxvi. 16; De. xxviii. 38. bag . . holes, a proverbial expression for labour spent to no profit, or permanent advantage.

Consideration enforced (*vv.* 2—5, 12).—I. The conduct reproved. 1. In reference to God's temple which is to be erected in the world; 2. In reference to the temple which is to be erected in our own hearts. II. The reproof administered. 1. An expostulary appeal; 2. A solemn admonition. III. The effect produced. 1. A great change was wrought in their minds; 2. A great encouragement was constantly afforded.[b]

Indolence a shameful sickness.—There once lived in Ghent a beggar, who was accustomed to collect alms upon the pretence that he had a secret disease lying in his bones and weakening his whole body, and that he dared not for shame mention the name of it. This appeal was exceedingly successful, until a person in authority, more curious than the rest, insisted upon following him, and examining him at home. At last the beggar confessed as follows: "That which pains me you see not; but I have a shameful disease in my bones, so that I cannot work; some call it sloth, and others term it idleness." Alas! that so many in our churches should be so far gone with this same sickness.[c]—*Idleness.*—It was the speech of Mr. Greenham (some time a painful preacher of this nation), that, when the devil tempted a poor soul, she came to him for advice, how she might resist the temptation; and he gave her this answer: "Never be idle, but be always well employed; for in my own experience I have found it, when the devil came to tempt me, I told him that I was not at leisure to hearken to his temptation, and by this means I resisted all his assaults." Thus must all of us do: when the devil comes to tempt any of us, say, "I am not at leisure to lend an ear to thy temptations; I am otherwise employed. I am in the work of my God, busied in the work of my lawful calling, and taken up with the thoughts of God's blessings thereupon." Then he will never be able to fasten upon thee; for so it is, that he never gets advantage of any man or woman, but either when they are out of God's way, or idle, or have their hands in some sinful action. Then it is that they do even tempt the tempter to tempt them, and lay themselves open to a world of sin and wickedness.[d]

7—9. (7, 8) mountain, prob. Lebanon, whence the cedar-wood was obtained.[a] "The wood-work, wainscoting and panelling, was the chief point now demanding attention." will be glorified, or, as the Chaldee expounds it, "I will place My glory there." (9) blow, so scattering it as chaff before the wind. Or the idea may be, "I sniffed at it," regarding it with contempt. run, make haste, show energy in your own selfish concerns.

Consider your ways (*v.* 7).—Consider—1. Their reasonableness, or how far they agree with the dictates of reason; 2. The inexpediency, or how far they agree with the calculations of enlightened self-respect, interest; 3. Their influence. or how far they agree with the claims of social obligation; 4. Their Scripturalness, or how far they agree with the Word of God; 5. Their consequences, or how far they agree with true ideas of the nature of eternal happiness. Apply:—(1) If your ways are wrong, change them; (2) If right, improve them.[b]

A dying request.—"I have one request to make to you," said a

dying Christian to his son; "will you grant it me?" The son promised compliance. "That you will, for six months after my death, retire alone to your room for half an hour every day, and think." "On what subject?" inquired the boy. "That," replied the father, "I leave entirely to yourself." He had been a disobedient son, but in this solemn hour he felt that no sacrifice was too great if he could only make amends for the past. The father died. The promise was fulfilled. At first his thoughts wandered to all sorts of subjects, till at length conscience began to work in him. He was alarmed, and was at length led to the Saviour; lived from thenceforth a useful life, and died a happy death.[c]

c Bib. Treasury.

10, 11. (10) **heaven**, *etc.*, De. xxviii. 23. **dew**, one of the most important agents in the sultry East, where rain only falls at fixed periods. (11) **drought**, Heb. *choreb*, sounding like *chareeb*, waste; wh. was the condition in wh. they allowed God's house to be. The terms used indicate a correspondence bet. the sin and the punishment, and so a special appropriateness in the punishment.[a]

The dew.—

Those verdant hills now bathed in morning dews,
Whose every drop outvies Golconda's gem.
Lo! one hangs glittering on yon blade of grass;
Spurn not that lucid trembler, but admire
Its glorious hues, and trace them to their source;
The nice arrangements of its particles.
Draw nigh;—through microscopic lens inspect
That single drop's profound elaborateness—
Most delicate, and wonderfully wrought.
Is it a work of chance? It is a world
Replete with life, and love, and joy. Its crowds
Dart swift from verge to verge (their ocean depths)
How nervous and minute each supple fin!
What made that film-like hinge on which it plays?
What hand, what eye, save God's could fashion it?[b]

a "If God cross us in our temporal affairs, and we meet with trouble and disappointment, we shall find this is the cause of it; the work we have to do for God and our own souls is left undone, and we seek our own things more than the things of Jesus Christ."—*Mat. Henry.*

b Merritt.

Water the poetry of nature.—It is the poet of nature who should write the nature of water. Familiar, even to neglect, this is a wonderful substance, and we forget to admire; beautiful, and we do not note its beauty. Transparent and colourless, it is the emblem of purity; in its mobility it is imbued with the spirit of life: a self-acting agent, a very will, in the unceasing river, the dancing brook, the furious torrent, and the restless ocean: speaking with its own voice, in the tinkling of the dropping cavern, the murmuring of the rill, the rush of the cascade, and the roar of the sea-wave; and, even in the placid lake, throwing its own spirit of vitality over the immovable objects around. And if its motion is the life of the landscape, it is at rest the point of contrast and repose for the turbulent multiplicity of the surrounding objects: a tempering shadow in reflecting the bright picture, and, as the mirror of the sky, a light amid darkness; while it is the colour to enhance what it contrasts, whether in its splendour or its shade. Its singular oppositions of character are not less striking. Yielding to every impulse, unresisting, even to light, it becomes the irresistible force before which the ocean-promontory crumbles to dust, and the rocky mountain is levelled with the plain below; a mechanical

"Smooth to the shelving brink, a copious flood rolls fair and placid, where collected all in one impetuous torrent, down the steep it thund'ring shoots, and shakes the country round. At first an azure sheet it rushes broad, then whitening by degrees, as prone it falls, and from the loud resounding rocks below, dash'd in a cloud of foam, it sends aloft a hoary mist, and forms a ceaseless shower. Nor even the torrid wave here finds repose, but raging still amid the shaggy rocks, now flashes o'er the scatter'd fragments, now aslant the hollow'd channel rapid darts, and

falling fast from gradual slope to slope, with wild infracted course and lessen'd roar it gains a safer bed, and steals at last along the mazes of the quiet vale."—*Thomson.*

c Macculloch.

"Years ago the inhabitants of London were in want of water. A noble Welshman, Sir Hugh Myddelton, planned how the want might be supplied. He designed the New River; at immense expense, so much so as almost to ruin himself, he carried out his benevolent scheme. The world was in want of living water; Jesus saw the want. At the sacrifice of His own life He resolved that it should be supplied. He cut a channel from ruin to blessedness, and ever since a plenteous supply of water has been flowing on." — *Rev. Thomas Jones.*

d Thomson.

power whose energy is without bounds. Of an apparently absolute neutrality, without taste. without smell, a powerless nothingness—that deceptive innocence is the solvent of everything, reducing the thousand solids of the earth to its own form. Again, existing at one instant, in the next it is gone, as if it were annihilated: to him who knows not ist nature, it has ceased to be. It is a lake, and in a short time it is nothing: again it is that lake, and it is a solid rock. It is rock-crystal at one instant, and in the next it is invisible: while the agent of its invisibility transports it beyond the earth: that rock is air. Thus sailing in the heavens, it descends again, unchanged, again to renew the same ceaseless round: for ever roaming between the earth and the vacant regions of space; wandering about the earth below, in the performance of its endless duties; and though appearing at rest, resting nowhere. This, and more, is water: powerful in its weakness and powerful its strength: a union of feebleness and force, of incessant activity and apparent tranquillity, of nullity and ubiquity, of insignificance and power, a miracle of creation.[c]

Water, its untold value.—

These roving mists, that constant now begin
To smoke along the hilly country; these,
With weightier rains and melted Alpine snows,
The mountain-cisterns fill—those ample stores
Of water, scooped among the hollow rocks,
Whence gush the streams, the ceaseless fountains play,
And their unfailing wealth the rivers draw.
Some sages say that, where the numerous wave
For ever lashes the resounding shore,
Drilled through the sandy stratum, every way
The waters with the sandy stratum rise;
Amid whose angles infinitely strained,
They joyful leave their jaggy salts behind,
And clear and sweeter as they soak along:
Nor stops the restless fluid; mounting still,
Though oft amidst the irriguous vale it springs;
But to the mountain courted by the sand,
That leads it darkling on in faithful maze,
Far from the parent-main, it boils again
Fresh into day; and all the glittering hill
Is bright with spouting rills.[d]

12—15. (12) **remnant**, or rest, Ne. vii. 72. **fear**, in the sense of humbly receiving the Divine reproof, and proceeding, at once and earnestly, to mend their ways. (13) **with you**, graciously recognising your penitential spirit, and active efforts to do the right. (14) **stirred**, *etc.*, the expression seems to indicate that even these leaders had grown lukewarm and careless. (15) **four and twentieth**, *etc.*,[a] the time is noted to show that, once aroused, the people set at once about the work.

Food at the house of God.—A little girl said to a gentleman who was never known to enter the house of God, "Sir, why don't you go to church; for I am sure, such as you are, you need food as well as myself." The gentleman answered her, "Pray, who feeds you, and what kind of food is it that you receive at church?" She replied, "Sir, it is God who feeds me there, and His Word is the food I am supplied with; and I assure you

a "The 24th day of the sixth month of the second year of Darius would fall in Sept. B.C. 521."—*Spk. Com.*

"Pleasure is the fatal rock which most have split on; for men, bewitch'd by the curs'd syren's voice, sail on regardless till they strike on ruin."—*Savage.*

that though my mother, being very poor, is sometimes scarcely able to give me food to eat, yet, fed as I am every Sunday with the Bread of life, I never know what the pains of hunger are." The gentleman, astonished at what he heard from the little girl, resolved from that time to attend the service of the sanctuary; and he has adhered to his determination, and now feels and confesses the great pleasure and profit that arise from a constant attendance on the means of grace.[b]

b J. Whitecross.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—3. (1) seventh month, Tisri, or Ethanim. (2, 3) first glory, as built by Solomon, and as seen before the Babylonish invasion. There might well have been some old men living who could remember it.[a] as nothing, as unworthy of comparison.[b]

The desire of all nations (*vr.* 3—9).—I. The inquiry which is here made. II. The exhortation which is here addressed. III. The assurance which is here given. I. The character under which Christ is here set forth; 2. The time of His manifestation; 3. The precursors of His coming; 4. The results with which it would be attended.

Memory.—The man who has been since boyhood a stranger from his home and country, and long a wanderer in many lands, will assure you that the past is to him like a dim and confused dream, and that there are few things which he can vividly recall. But let him only return to the home of his childhood, to the rural village, or the old house in which he was nurtured, how touching is it to watch in him the opening up of page after page filled with memories which he cannot choose but read, though each page in the old life-book may be blotted by his tears. As he journeys to the place from which, long ago, he took his departure as a boy, and sees the old hills, the fields, the streams, the rocks, the trees, the church and churchyard, the school, the scattered homesteads.—there is not an object that does not summon up persons who have passed away, and incidents of joy and sorrow, which, up to that moment, he had forgotten![c]—*Evil in the memory.*—Most men's memories are like jet, or electrical bodies, that attract and hold fast only straws or feathers, or such vain and light things; discourse to them of the affairs of the world, or some idle and romantic story, their memories retain this as faithfully as if it were engraven on leaves of brass: whereas the great and important truths of the Gospel, the great mysteries of heaven and concernments of eternity, leave no more impression upon them than words on the air in which they are spoken. Whence is this, but only that the one sort work themselves into the memory through the interest they have got in the affections, which the other cannot do? Had we but the same delight in heavenly objects, did we but receive the truth in the love of it, and mingle it with faith in the hearing, this would fix that volatileness and flittiness of our memories, and make every truth as indelible as it is necessary.[d]

a Ezr. iii. 12.

"It was now about 66 years since the destruction of the first temple by the Chaldæans."—*Wordsworth.*

b "The Jews note the foll. 5 points of inferiority. The absence from the second temple of (1) the sacred fire; (2) the Shekinah; (3) the ark and cherubim; (4) the Urim and Thummim; (5) the spirit of prophecy."—*Fausset.*

vr. 1—5. *J. C. Hare*, ii. 65.

c Dr. Macleod.

"It is not pleasure which corrupts men, it is men who corrupt pleasure. Pleasure is good in itself. It is the seasoning which God, the all-wise and the all-good, gives to useful things and needful acts, in order that we may seek them."—*Dumoulin.*

d Bp. Hopkins.

4—7. (4) be strong, *comp.* Jos. i. 7; Zec. iv. 6—9. The true strength to do duty, and to overcome difficulty, follows the conviction that God is with us. (5) covenanted, God's mercies are ever set before us in this light, they are *faithfulness* to His

a "The Jews hesitated about going forward with the work,

through dread of the world-power, Medo-Persia, influenced by the craft of Samaria. The Prophet assures them that these and all other world-powers are to fall before Messiah, who is to be associated with this temple; therefore they need fear nought."-*Fausset.*

b "If the Messias was to come while the second temple stood, and if that temple many ages hath ceased to be, then is that Messias *already come*."-*Bp. Pearson.*

v. 4. *G. Currey, Huls. Lec.* 184; *H. R. Roxby*, 367.

vv. 6, 7. *J. Newton*, iv. 29; *C. Bradley*, i. 113; *J. C. Hare*, ii. 83.

vv. 6—9. *Bp. Lake*, 57; *Abp. Tillotson*, v. 197; *Dr. J. Conant*, i. 579.

v. 7. *Bp. Brownrig*, i. 105; *J. Flavel*, ii. 225; *R. C. Trench, Huls. Lec.* 1.

c G. Brooks. "To unconverted persons, a great part of the Bible resembles a letter written in cipher. The blessed Spirit's office is to act as God's decipherer, by letting His people into the secret of celestial experience, as the key and clue to those sweet mysteries of grace which were before as a garden shut up, or as a fountain sealed, or as a book written in an unknown character."-*Toplady.*

d Dr. Osborn.

v. 9. *J. C. Hare*, ii. 201; *Bp. Hall*,

covenant and His promise. my spirit, Ne. ix. 20. (6) yet once,[a] He. xii. 26. Shaking implies Divine judgments on the nations. (7) desire, *etc.*,[b] comp. Ac. xxviii. 20: Ge. xii. 3.

The glory of the latter house (*v.* 7).—I. The fulfilment of this prediction in reference to the second temple. 1. By the presentation of Jesus; 2. By His teaching; 3. By His expulsion of the traders; 4. By His miracles. II. The fulfilment of this prediction in reference to the Christian Church. 1. By the spiritual presence of the Redeemer; 2. By the observance of His ordinances; 3. By the perpetuation of His doctrine; 4. By the display of His saving power; 5. By the character of His worshippers.[c]

Offices of the Holy Spirit.—He is represented as undertaking and sustaining a great variety of offices in behalf of men; as endowing men with a great variety and abundance of gifts, of which He is the source and author, and in reference to all these offices and gifts they are said to partake of Him, and to have, in proportion to their faith, and according to their faith, a common participation in Him, a right in Him, enduring so long as there is a Church to sustain in the world, till faith is swallowed up in sight. These offices are, perhaps, most compendiously described by the word "Comforter" in the text, which seems to convey the idea of all the help in which men stand in need of, and which they may call upon Him to exercise in their behalf. The idea is that conveyed in the words of the Apostle—"help in time of need" asked for at "the throne of grace." I don't pretend that the paraphrase is exact, but I am quite sure that the ideas are substantially the same—help in time of need, sought at the throne of grace, be that help what it may. One of our old divines says: "In the sense in which the term Advocate is here employed, we may apply it to a great variety of persons. If we are sick, we call to us a physician; if we are perplexed, we call to us a lawyer; if we are going to build, we call to us an architect; if we are in trouble, we call to us some kind and affectionate friend; and so as we want it we get advice, and instruction, and comfort from day to day." And so all these persons may be called advocates, or persons called to us, as our necessities or circumstances dictate. But with far greater propriety may we say (such is the wonderful condescension of Him with whom we have to do) this of the Holy Ghost. If we are ignorant we call to Him, and He is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation; if we are sorrowful we call to Him, and He is the Holy Ghost the Comforter; if we are oppressed with unbelief, we call to Him and He gives us power to believe; if we are unholy and under the influence of strong passion, we call to Him and He allays the tumult in our breasts; sanctifies us in body, soul, and spirit. And so, in whatever thing we call upon Him for, suited to our spiritual nature, the Lord our God, blessed be His name, is nigh unto us. And that is the peculiar and crowning glory of the Christian dispensation. We may say far more truly than it was said by Israel of old, even with the tabernacle and pillar of cloud in the midst of them, "What people is there that hath the Lord their God so nigh unto them in all things that they call upon Him for?"[d]

8, 9. (8) silver is mine, therefore in asking its devotement to the building of His house, God does but ask His own.

(9) greater, bec. the glory of the former house was its outward magnificence, but the glory of the latter the presence of "God manifest in the flesh." peace, Eze. xxxiv. 25, 26; Mi. iv. 3, 4.

The second shall be first (*v.* 9).—I. Because Christ was to come to it. II. Because Christ was to be made atonement for sin there. III. Because it was to give place to a new and better temple than either Solomon's or itself.

Cost of gold.—A ship bearing a hundred emigrants has been driven from her course, and wrecked on a desert island, far from the tracks of man. There is no way of escape; but there are means of subsistence. An ocean, unvisited by ordinary voyagers, circles round their prison; but they have seed, with a rich soil to receive, and a genial climate to ripen it. Ere any plan has been laid, or any operations begun, an exploring party returns to headquarters, reporting the discovery of a gold mine. Thither instantly the whole party resort to dig. They labour successfully, day by day, and month after month. They acquire and accumulate large heaps of gold. But spring is past, and not a field has been cleared, nor a grain of seed committed to the ground. The summer comes, and their wealth increases; but the store of food is small. In harvest they begin to discover that their heaps of gold are worthless. When famine stares them in the face, a suspicion shoots across their fainting hearts that the gold has cheated them. They rush to the woods, fell the trees, dig the roots, till the ground, sow the seed. It is too late! Winter has come; and their seed rots in the ground. They die of want in the midst of their treasures. This earth is the little isle, eternity the ocean around it: on this shore we have been cast. There is a living seed; but gold mines attract us. We spend spring and summer there: winter overtakes us toiling there, destitute of the bread of life, forgetting that we ought to "seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto us."[b]

10–14. (10) ninth month, or *Chisleu*. (11) law, or what is the Mosaic regulation about a certain matter? (12) if . . holy, Le. vi. 27. (13) unclean, *etc.*, Nu. xix. 13, 14, 22. (14) so is this people,[a] by reason of their wrong spirit, their backwardness, and rebelliousness, they are making unacceptable all their offered worship.

Purity.—A little girl, not six years old, who attended a Sabbath school, and had just begun to read in the New Testament, was promised a hymn-book, on condition that she would learn to read the fifth and sixth chapters of Matthew's Gospel within the space of a fortnight. She immediately undertook the task, and some time after, when reading to the gentleman who promised the reward, he caused her to stop at the end of the first twelve verses, in order to inquire of her, which of the qualities described in the beatitudes she should desire most to possess. Pausing a little, with a modest smile, she replied, "I would rather be pure in heart." On being asked the reason of her preference, she answered to this effect: "Sir, if I could but obtain a pure heart, I should then possess all the other good qualities spoken of in this chapter."[b]—"The pure in heart" are they whose hearts God hath "purified even as He is pure;" who are purified, through faith in the blood of Jesus, from every unholy affection; who, being "cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfect

v. 160; *J. Benson*, i. 217; *Dr. Pusey*, —; *W. Dealtry*, 420; *Bp. Kay*, 341; *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 327.

"The rich are wise: he that upon his back rich garments wears, is wise, though on his head grow Midas' ears: gold is the strength, the sinews of the world; the health, the soul, the beauty most divine; a mask of gold hides all deformities: gold is heav'n's physic, life's restorative."—*Dekker.*

"Like dew upon the grass, when pleasure's sun shines on your virtues, all your virtue's done."—*Marston.*

b Rev. W. Arnot.

vv. 11–14. *J. C. Hare*, ii. 123.

a "Though this people live in a holy land, it does not communicate any holiness to the people by any intrinsic virtue of its own, but it entails upon them all an obligation to personal holiness."—*Wordsworth.*

b Whitecross.

"Oh, there are thoughts that slumber in the soul, like sweetest sounds, amid the harp's loose strings, till airs

from heaven, an earth at dewy nightfall visitant, awake the sleeping melody."—*Professor Wilson.*
c T. Wesley.

holiness in the love and fear of God." They are, through the power of His grace, purified from pride by the deepest poverty of spirit; from anger, from every unkind or turbulent passion, by meekness and gentleness; from every desire but to please and enjoy God, to know and love Him more and more, by that hunger and thirst after righteousness which now engrosses their whole soul: so that now they love the Lord their God with all their heart and with all their soul and mind and strength.[c]

15—17. (15) **consider**, ch. i. 5. **upward**, better, *backward*. (16) **heap**, that should have been, in a good season, twenty measures. God sent bad seasons, as a sign of His displeasure. (17) **blasting**, *etc.*, Am. iv. 9. **turned not**, recognising in My judgments the designs of correcting love.[a]

Nature of consideration.—Consideration is that glass which represents spiritual objects in other colours than were before observed and detected in them. Sin, that looked but with a faint red before, through this glass appears all scarlet and crimson. God's laws, which before were hardly so much as human injunctions, through this glass appear so beautiful, so rational, so wise, so wonderful, so suiting to an intelligent nature, that a man, with David, cannot hold, but must cry out, "O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day. I have seen an end of all perfection, but Thy commandment is exceeding broad." The New Jerusalem, which looked but like an ordinary building, when viewed through this glass, the tower and bulwarks of it are seen glittering afar off, the pearls and precious stones it is paved with shine with more than ordinary lustre; and that which looked but dull and weak before, now dazzles the spectator's eyes with its Oriental brightness. Till consideration came in, the Prodigal saw little. He heard men talk of the beauty of God's ways; but alas, he saw no such thing. To him they looked as the way of Sion, rugged, uneven, and unfrequented; and the fruits of the Spirit appeared unpleasant and ill-tasted, fitter for the rabble and scum of mankind than men of a brisk, airy temper. But he no sooner opens the window, and lets in these beams of consideration, but all those fancies, as witches at the name of Jesus, vanish, and he is rapt into that high esteem of the ways of God, that he prefers being but a door-keeper in the house of God, before the office of Grand Vizier at the court of Ahasuerus.[b]

Contemplation.—Some there be that say, "It is not worth so much time and trouble, to think of the greatness of the joys above: so that we can make sure they are ours, we know they are great." But as these men obey not the command of God, which requires them to have "their conversation in heaven," and to "set their affections on things above;" so they wilfully make their own lives miserable, by refusing the delights which God hath set before them. . . . As for you whose heart God hath weaned from all things here below, I hope you will value this heavenly life, and take one walk every day in the New Jerusalem. God is your love and your desire; you would fain be more acquainted with your Saviour; and I know it is your grief that your hearts are not nearer to Him, and that they do not more feelingly love and delight in Him. Oh, try this life of meditation on your heavenly rest. Here is the mount on which the fluctuating ark of your souls may rest. Let the world see by your heavenly lives, that religion is something more than opinions and disputes,

a "This people either saw not the hand of God in it (imputing it to chance), or saw not their own sin as the provoking cause of it, and so turned not to Him."—*Mat. Henry.*
"Modern science has shown that blasting and mildew are produced by *plants*—they are the diseases occasioned by the growth of minute *fungi*, . . . the functions of vegetable nature are reversed in them, their pores inhale oxygen, and exhale carbonic gas, like animals."—*Hugh Macmillan.*
v. 17. *A. Shanks*, 451, 464.
b Anthony Horneck.
"The man who has learnt to think well and rightly never need be alone; for he can people solitude, and cheer the dreariness of night, with bright and pure thoughts. He may languish innocently in the dungeon, whither the tyrant's hand has thrust him, or he may be stretched on his restless couch in the hospital, or he may lie emaciated on his pallet of straw in his lonely garret: but alone he cannot be; for holy and happy thoughts, like

or a talk of outward duties. If ever a Christian is like himself, and answerable to his principles and profession, it is when he is most serious and lively in this duty.

As Moses, before he died, went up into Mount Nebo, to take a survey of the land of Canaan, so the Christian ascends the mount of contemplation, and by faith surveys his rest. . . . As Daniel, in his captivity, daily opened his window towards Jerusalem, though far out of sight, when he went to God in his devotions, so may the believing soul, in this captivity of the flesh, look towards "Jerusalem which is above." And as Paul was to the Colossians, so may the believer be with the glorified spirits, "though absent in the flesh, yet with them in the spirit, joying and beholding their heavenly order." And as the lark sweetly sings while she soars on high, but is suddenly silenced when she falls to the earth, so is the frame of the soul most delightful and divine while it keeps in the view of God by contemplation. Alas, we make there too short a stay, fall down again, and lay by our music.[c]

18, 19. (18) upward, better, *forward*. In obedience to the Divine will they may confidently look forward to the Divine blessing. (19) yet in the barn, the month was November, so the whole work of the year was before them, and they should find in it all the signs of God's returning favour: there should be good weather for preparing and feeding, and presently abundant crops.[a]

God recompenses our works (*v.* 10).—I. Review the dealings of God with us in past times. 1. Before we began to seek the Lord; 2. Since we returned to Him. II. Consider the anticipations we are authorised to indulge. 1. The communications of His grace; 2. The manifestations of His love; 3. A meetness for glory. Address—(1) Those in whom the foundations of God's spiritual temple are not yet laid; (2) Those who are building up themselves a temple for their God; (3) Those who think this distinction visionary.[b]

20—23. (20) four . . month, the same day as the prophecy, *v.* 10. (21) Zerubbabel, as the head of the civil government. shake, *etc.*, the usual fig. for violent political convulsions.[a] (22) overthrow, *etc.*, "All other world-kingdoms are to be overthrown to make way for Christ's universal kingdom.[b] come down, or, brought down, and laid low. (23) O Zerubbabel, here treated as the representative of Messiah. as a signet, or as one who bears the king's signet, as the sign of his authority.[c]

The charmed circle.—The materials and devices of wedding-rings are scarcely more various than the explanations given by learned writers of the significance of "the pure and perfect arrabo." That the gift of a ring was held by the ancient peoples of the earth to be a token of the giver's affection for, and confidence in, the person to whom he gave it, the illustrators prove by references to sacred Scripture and classic literature. It follows, therefore, that the bridal hoop symbolises the groom's devotion to, and perfect trust in, the bride. It is a single object, and therefore signifies the perfect oneness of two persons united in wedlock. It having no ends, the circlet is a type of the endlessness and perpetuity of matrimonial love. It denotes the fidelity with which the man weds the woman; even as the episcopal

angels of mercy, flit to and fro before his mental vision, and become his joyful companions." — *R. Roberts.*

"A disloyal thought hath in it the nature of the formed evil to which it tends. Here is seminal apostasy. The cockatrice egg, long enough hatched, becomes a serpent, and therefore ought to be crushed betime. A man's heart now begins sinfully to tempt him, as he is never tempted with effect till he be led away by his own heart and enticed; and now is the conception of that sin which, being finished, is eventually mortal, and brings forth death." — *John Howe.*

c Baxter.

a Comp. Hag. ii. 15. Is. i. 19; Zec. viii. 9—12.

v. 19. *R. Erskine,* vii. 9.

b C. Simeon, M.A.

a Mat. xxiv. 7, 29.

b Fausset.

Da. ii. 44; Re. xi. 15.

c "I will invest thee with My power and authority, as the head of My Church, and judge of the world. So kings depute their viceroys, by giving them their signet."—*Lowth.*

vv. 20—23. *J. C. Hare*, ii. 143; *Bp. Brownrig*, i. 23.

ring betokens the faith with which a bishop takes the Church for his spouse. Swinburne holds that its roundness signifies "the round flowing of mutual love and hearty affection." The exactness with which a proper ring fits the finger for which it has been fashioned represents the nicety and perfect harmony with which a married couple should fit one another in temper, taste, and mental capacity. Just as the fitting neither pinches nor slips from the finger, so fitting spouses neither nip nor avoid one another. As one of the several valuable articles which the groom paid for his bride, the ring itself is regarded by some authorities as a symbol of purchase.

To a lost ring.—

Oh, for thy history now! Hadst thou a tongue
To whisper of thy secrets, I could lay
Upon thy jewell'd tracery mine ear
And dream myself in heaven. Thou hast been worn
In that fair creature's side, and thou hast felt
The bounding of the haughtiest blood that e'er
Sprang from the heart of woman; and thy gold
Has lain upon her forehead in the hour
Of sadness, when the weary thoughts came fast;—
And life was but a bitterness with all
Its vividness and beauty. She has gazed
In her fair girlhood on thy snowy pearls,
And mused away the hours; and she has bent
On thee the downcast radiance of her eye
When a deep tone was eloquent in her ear.
And thou hast lain upon her cheek, and prest
Back on her heart its beatings, and put by
From her veil'd temples the luxuriant curls;
And, in her peaceful sleep, when she has lain
In her unconscious beauty, and the dreams
Of her high heart came goldenly and soft,
Thou hast been there unchidden, and hast felt
The swelling of the clear transparent veins
As the rich blood rush'd through them, warm and fast.
I am impatient as I gaze on thee,
Thou inarticulate jewel! Thou hast heard
With thy dull ear such music!—the low tone
Of a young sister's tenderness, when night
Hath folded them together like one flower—
The sudden snatch of a remember'd song
Warbled capriciously—the careless word
Lightly betraying the inaudible thought
Working within the heart; and, more than all,
Thou hast been lifted, when the fervent prayer
For a loved mother, or the sleeping one
Lying beside her, trembled on her lip,
And the warm tear that from her eye stole out,
As the soft flash fell over it, has lain
Amid thy shining jewels like a star.[d]

"The richest saint must be, and is, a humble beggar at grace's door all his days: and Christ is the Lord of the house, and the dispenser of the alms: and as the alms is too good not to be patiently waited for, so the Lord is too good and too great to be quarrelled with; and never did a believer get any good by complaining of Him. Complain to Him, and pray and ask largely, but still with faith and patience. Knock at His door, but stay; and bless Him that ever He gave you any crumbs of His grace: mix your prayers for new wanted grace with praises for His old dispensed grace. Christ loveth you, and hath proved it. Believe it, and bless Him for it, and wait for His renewing His love to you; and in due time you will find that He will not only answer, but outdo your desires to Him, and all your expectations from Him." — *Traill.*

[d] *N. P. Willis.*

ZECHARIAH.

Introduction.

I. Author. ZECHARIAH, = whom "*Jehovah remembers*," called sometimes the son of Iddo, sometimes the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo (Ezra v. 1, vi. 14 ; Zech. i. 1, 7, vii. 1, 8). **II. Time.** B.C. 520—518. Zech. began to prophesy two months after Haggai, and the two Prophets were contemporary, at least for a short time. **III. Style.** The diversity of style has led many to think that the last six chapters could not have been written by Zech. ; but Horne is of opinion that the difficulty is of easy solution. Upon the whole this conclusion may be drawn : that, setting aside the doubtful authority of St. Matthew's text (xxvii. 9), where it seems that *Jeremiah* should be *Zech.*, there is nothing else to be found sufficient to invalidate the title of Zech. to the chaps. in question ; and, consequently, that it was *not* written by Jeremiah, as Mede, Hammond, and others have supposed, nor *before* the time of that Prophet, as Abp. Newcome conjectured, whose opinion was adopted by Abp. Secker, and also by Doederlein. **IV. Theme.** The prophecies of Zech., containing as they do a portraiture of the destiny of God's people to the end of time, and comprehending so many mighty events which yet await their fulfilment, present to the interpreter many difficulties, some of which have hitherto been found insoluble, and will probably remain unsolved till the mystery of God contained in them shall have been fulfilled. One thing, however, they clearly reveal to us—that the future triumph of God's kingdom is certain, and that all the great movements in the history of the nations, however unpropitious they seem at the time, are parts of the mighty plan of Divine providence, which shall end in making the kingdoms of this world "the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."—*Dr. Barrows.*

Synopsis.

(According to Horne.)

Part I.—PROPHECIES DELIVERED IN THE SECOND YEAR OF DARIUS i.—vi.

Discourse I. .....i. 11, 13
Discourse II. .....iii. 1—10
Discourse III. .....iv.
Discourse IV. .....v. 1—11
Discourse V.....vi. 1—15

Part II.—PROPHECIES DELIVERED IN THE FOURTH YEAR OF DARIUS vii.—xiv.

Discourse I. .....vii.—viii. 23
Discourse II. .....ix.—x. 12
Discourse III. .....xi. 13
Discourse IV .....xii.—xiv. 21

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) **eighth month,** two months after Haggai commenced his prophesying. **Zechariah,** Ezr. v. 1; Ne. xii. 16. **the prophet,** this is the designation of Zechariah, not of Iddo. (2) **sore displeased,** *Heb.* "displeased with a displeasure," *i.e.* vehemently displeased.[a] (3) **them,** the Jews of that day. **turn,** *etc.*, Mat. iii. 7.[b]

An exhortation to turn to God (*vv.* 3—6).—I. A friendly exhortation. 1. Turn to the Lord; 2. An encouragement. II. A salutary caution: walk not as your disobedient fathers have done. III. A convincing appeal. 1. Has not the Word of God taken hold of multitudes who have gone before us? 2. Have not many who have gone before us borne testimony to this truth?[c]

Timothy East.—Many years ago the excellent Mr. Jay, of Bath, preached a sermon in Surrey Chapel at one of his visits to the metropolis. It was blessed to the conversion of a young man who happened to be present, who subsequently became a useful minister of the Gospel. He was settled for some time in the town of Reading, and among his hearers on a certain Sabbath evening was a wild youth who had embraced sceptical views, and was much given to turning sacred things into ridicule. It was his intention on the following week to leave his native land, unknown to any one; but he said, with an oath, that he would turn Methodist before going, although nothing was further from his expectation, and in reality from his desire. He went, however, to hear the minister preach, and the thoughtless one was arrested, so that he who went to scoff remained to pray. He also became a servant of Christ, and was well known as Timothy East, of Birmingham. Like Mr. Jay he was in the habit of going once a year to London, being one of the supplies at the Tabernacle in Moorfields. A young man, under somewhat peculiar circumstances, was induced to attend there one evening when Mr. East was preaching from the words, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" The arrows of conviction entered into his soul, and soon after he found joy and peace through believing. His name was John Williams, who turned out to be one of the most devoted and successful missionaries of modern times.

Captain Scott and Mr. Powys.—While the late Rev. J. Scott, of Matlock, was an officer in the army, he was called by Divine grace under the ministry of the Rev. W. Romaine. Some time afterwards, as he was about to visit his friends in Shropshire, Mr. Romaine gave him an introductory letter to Mr. Powys, an eminently pious gentleman, at Berwick, in that county. The Rev. Henry Venn, the author of *The Complete Duty of Man*, was then on a visit to Mr. Powys, and was standing with Mr. and Mrs. Powys at the parlour window in the front of the hall, when they saw the captain enter on the lawn, dressed in his uniform, and riding his military horse. Mr. Powys recognised him at a distance, and said, "There is Captain Scott; what can he want here? I am determined not to see him, if I can avoid it." Upon this they all withdrew. Captain Scott rode up and asked, "Is

a "The Heb. root conveys that idea of breaking forth into anger or displeasure wh. we have in the word *ebullition.*" —*Spk. Com.*

b "Though God hath brought you back from captivity, yet this state will not long last unless ye are really converted. God has heavier scourges ready, and has begun to give symptoms of displeasure."—*Calvin.*

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"I have now been nearly twenty years in the ministry of the Gospel, and I here publicly state to you that I do not believe I could enumerate three persons over fifty years of age, whom I have ever heard ask the solemn and infinitely momentous question, 'What shall I do to be saved?'"—*Dr. Bedell.*

"In a revival of religion in Jackson county, Ga., America, in the summer of 1846, out of eighty hopeful conversions, sixty-three of whom united with the church, not more than three or four were past the age of twenty-five. In the great work in Athens, which followed, there was a similar proportion of

youth. In other revivals in the same state, in 1845 and 1846, including in all not far from five hundred additions to the churches, at least as large a proportion were from twelve to twenty-five years of age, and these facts are, perhaps, a fair average throughout the country. Ponder it, ye who are putting far off the evil day, and trusting to advanced life to enter the gate of heaven!"—*Dr. Haven.*

a Comp. Is. xxxi. 6; Je. iii. 12, xviii. 11; Eze. xviii. 30; Ho. xiv. 1.

b "The thought appears to be this: 'Your fathers have perished, as was foretold, and their fate ought to warn you. But you may say, The prophets too are dead. I grant it, but still, My words do not die; though dead, their prophetical words from Me, fulfilled against your fathers, are not dead with them. Beware, then, lest ye share their fate!'"—*Fausset.*

c G. Brooks.

"When a man has washed his body in the bath he does not need to wash again, save his feet, which may be soiled even in passing from the bath to the dressing chamber. This most aptly represents the general purification which, in their great principles, the heart

Mr. Powys at home?" The servant, uninstructed by his master to adopt the fashionable expedient of stating an untruth to avoid an inconvenience, informed him that he was. Mr. Powys was called, and received his visitor with an air of distant civility, thinking that his presence would be an interruption to the spiritual enjoyments of himself and his friends. But after he had read Mr. Romaine's letter, which he received with considerable agitation, giving an account of the captain's conversion, he caught him in his arms, and embraced and rejoiced over him as over one raised from the dead. In this position, with an elevated voice, he cried out, "Mr. Venn! Mr. Venn! Mrs. Powys! Mrs. Powys! come here quickly! here is Captain Scott a convert to Christ! a new creature in Christ Jesus!" They both came, and being informed of the contents of Mr. Romaine's letter, in imitation of the angels in heaven, rejoiced over him who had been dead, and was alive again; who had been lost, but was found.

4—6. (4) **former prophets**, more esp. Hosea, Joel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.[a] Those who listened to these Prophets, but neither heeded nor obeyed, had set a bad example. (5) **where are they?** *i.e.* recall the Divine judgments under wh. they have fallen. **live for ever**, or abide from generation to generation.[b] (6) **words**, *etc.*, *i.e.* denunciations and judgments. **take hold**, were they not fulfilled in the experience of your rebellious fathers? **and said**, *comp.* La. i. 18. ii. 17.

Your fathers (*v.* 5).—I. Where are they if they have died impenitent and unbelieving? 1. They are in a state in which they are deprived of all the objects in which they sought their happiness; 2. They are in a state in which they do not enjoy any of the means of grace; 3. They are in a state in which God is known only as a God of vengeance. II. Where are they if they died penitent believers? They are in a state in which—1. They are free from all suffering; 2. In which they are exempt from all temptation; 3. They are relieved from all doubt and despondency; 4. They are unstained with sin. Apply:—(1) Where are they now? (2) Where shall we be soon?[c]

Conversion a radical change.—I passed by a piece of common which some lord of the manor or other had been enclosing, as those rascals always will if they can, to rob the poor of their rights, and filch every morsel of green grass upon which we may freely plant our feet; but I noticed that the enclosers had only railed it round, but had not dug it up, nor ploughed it, nor planted it; and though they had cut down the gorse, it was coming up again; of course it would, for it was a common still, and a bit of fence or rail could not alter it: the furze would come peeping up, and ere long the enclosure would be as wild as the heath outside. But this is not God's way of working. When God encloseth a heart that hath laid common with sin, does He cut down the thorns and the briers and then plant fir trees? (Isa. lv. 13.) No, no; but He so changeth the soil, that from the ground itself, from its own vitality, there spontaneously starts up the fir tree and the myrtle. This is a most wonderful result. You take a man and leave him at heart the same godless man. You mend his habits; you make him go to church, or to the meeting-house: you clothe him; you break his wine bottle; you rinse his mouth out, so that he does not talk so filthily; and

altogether you say, "He's now a respectable man." Ah! but if these outward respectabilities and rightnesses are only skin deep, you have done nothing. At least, what you have done is no great wonder; there is nothing in it to be proud of. But suppose this man can be so changed, that just as freely as he was wont to curse he now delights to pray, and just as heartily as he hated religion he now finds pleasure in it, and just as earnestly as he sinned he now delights to be obedient to the Lord; ah! then, this is a wonder, a miracle which man cannot accomplish, a marvel which only the grace of God can work, and which gives to God His highest glory.

and character undergo when a sinner is converted to God; and at the same time the daily and hourly soiling or pollution, fr. contact with the world, which every convert is ever contracting, and from which he is ever requiring to be cleansed." — *Dr. Wardlaw.*

7, 8. (7) **Sebat**, the name for the eleventh month in use subsequent to the captivity. (8) **by night**, prob. in the evening. The expression may intimate that it was a *mental* vision. **red horse**, the colour that represents bloodshed.[a] The rider is the Son of God, as captain of the Lord's hosts. **myrtle trees**, here a symbol of the Jewish Church, as then in a lowly condition.[b] **in the bottom**, "as if he and his companions were refreshing themselves in a shady valley, after the fatigues of war." **speckled, or bay.**

Red horses (*v.* 8).—The word here translated red signifies blood-red, not any kind of bright bay, or other colour usual among horses. But the custom of painting or dyeing animals for riding, whether asses or horses, explains the nature of this description. Tavernier, speaking of a city which he visited, says, "Five hundred paces from the gate of the city we met a young man of a good family, for he was attended by two servants, and rode upon an ass, the hinder part of which was painted red." And Mungo Park informs us that the Moorish sovereign Ali always rode upon a milk-white horse, with its tail dyed red.[c]

a Re. vi. 4.

b "By myrtles I do not mean the dwarf myrtles which grow in greenhouses in England, but such as Zechariah spoke of, eight or ten feet high. They grow nearest to perfection in shaded valleys, and therefore at once associate themselves with everything serene and peaceful."—*Gadsby.*

c Burder.

9—11. (9) **with me**, better, *in me*. The phrase implies internal, intimate communication.[a] (10) **walk . . earth**, ch. vi. 7. The colours of the horses may denote the different kinds of judgment executed by their riders. Some think the idea is that "to these angels He hath entrusted the affairs of the Persian empire."[b] (11) **at rest**, from commotions or wars. This then was a convenient and hopeful time for rebuilding the temple.

An Arabian bower.—Wide galleries ran all around the four sides, whose Moorish arches, slender pillars, and arabesque ornaments, carried the mind back, as in a dream, to the reign of Oriental romance in Spain. In the middle of the court, a fountain threw high its silvery water, falling in a never-ceasing spray into a marble basin, fringed with a deep border of fragrant violets. The water in the fountain, pellucid as crystal, was alive with myriads of gold and silver fishes, twinkling and darting through it, like so many living jewels. Around the fountain ran a walk, paved with a mosaic of pebbles, laid in various fanciful patterns; and this again was surrounded by turf smooth as green velvet. Two large orange-trees, now fragrant with blossoms, threw a delicious shade; arabesque sculpture, containing the choicest flowering plants of the tropics: huge pomegranate trees, with their glossy leaves and flame-coloured flowers, dark-leaved Arabian jessamines, with their silvery stars, geraniums, luxuriant roses bending beneath their heavy abundance of flowers, golden jessamines, lemon-scented verbenum, all united

a Jerome.

b Lowth.

Job i. 6, 7, ii. 1, 2; 1 Pe. v. 8.

"Rest unto our souls!—'tis all we want—the end of all our wishes and pursuits; give us a prospect of this, we take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth to have it in possession: we seek for it in titles, in riches and pleasures—climb up after it by ambition—come down again and stoop for it by avarice—try all extremes; still we are gone out of the way; nor is it till after many miserable experiments that

we are convinced at last we have been seeking everywhere for it but where there is a prospect of finding it: and that is within ourselves, in a meek and lowly disposition of heart."—*Sterne.*

their bloom and fragrance, while here and there a mystic old aloe, with its strange, massive leaves, sat looking like some hoary old enchanter, sitting in weird grandeur among the more perishable bloom and fragrance around it.[c]

An alcove.—
Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side
Acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub,
Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,
Rear'd high their flourish'd heads between, and wrought
Mosaic; under foot the violet,
Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
Broider'd the ground, more colour'd than with stone
Of costliest emblem. In shadier bow'r
More sacred and sequester'd, though but feign'd,
Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor nymph
Nor Faunus haunted.[d]

c *Mrs. Stowe.*

d *Milton.*

12—15. (12) threescore and ten years, reckoned from the captivity of Zedekiah to the second year of Darius Hystaspes. (13) comfortable, such as brought comforting and assurance. (14) jealous, better, *zealous:* ch. viii. 2. Full of anxious concern for the well-being of His people. (15) heathen, here esp. the Chaldæans, who had exceeded their commission in their severe dealings with God's people.[a]

Christ's intercession for Jerusalem (*vv.* 12, 13).—I. The angel's intercession. 1. No other than the Lord Jesus Christ; 2. It was for the restoration of God's favour to His chosen people. II. Jehovah's answer. 1. Of which we are afterwards more clearly informed; 2. Was it not good words? Apply:—(1) What encouragement to pray for our own souls; (2) And also to intercede for the Church of God.[b]

Conversion truly represented.—A minister, in the county of Tyrone, in Ireland, had for some weeks observed a little ragged boy come every Sabbath, and place himself in the centre of the aisle, directly opposite the pulpit, where he seemed astonishingly attentive, and eating, as it were, his words. He was desirous of knowing who the child was, but could obtain no information concerning him. At length the boy was missed from his usual place for several weeks. In a little time a man called on the minister, and told him that a boy, very ill, was desirous of seeing him; but added, "I am really ashamed to ask you to go so far; but it is a child of mine, and he refused to have any one but you. He is altogether an extraordinary boy, and talks a great deal about things that I do not understand." The minister promised to go, and kept his promise. The rain poured down in torrents, and he had six miles of rugged mountain to pass. On arriving where he was directed, he saw a most wretched cabin indeed; and the man he had seen in the morning was waiting at the door. He was shown in, and found the inside of the hovel as miserable as the outside. In a corner, on a little straw, he beheld one whom he recognised as the little boy who had so regularly attended his church. As he approached the wretched bed, the child raised himself up, and, stretching forth his arms, said,

a "Reference may be to the new troubles brought by their enemies upon the Jews after their return to Jerus., and especially in hindering them from rebuilding the temple."—*Lowth.*

Is. xlvii. 6; Am. i. 9, 11.

b *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"As a locomotive cannot turn itself on the line of rails, but must be taken on the machine provided for that purpose, and turned by the power of man, so the sinner cannot convert himself from the nature and ways of sin. He must be brought in contact with the Gospel, and by the agency of the Holy Ghost be turned fr. darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."—*John Bate.*

"His own right hand hath gotten Him the victory," and shortly after expired.

16, 17. (16) line, measuring it out for rebuilding. (17) my cities, not Jerusalem only. prosperity, as the sign of God's returned favour. spread abroad, overflow, as a vessel or fountain.[a] choose, or show, by gracious signs, His choice.

Comfort from God.—

Oh, Thou! that dry'st the mourner's tear,
How dark this world would be,
If, when deceived and wounded here,
We could not fly to Thee!

But Thou wilt heal the broken heart,
Which, like the plants that throw
Their fragrance from the wounded part,
Breathes sweetness out of woe.

Then sorrow, touch'd by Thee, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray.
As darkness shows us worlds of light
We could not see by day.[b]

18—21. (18) four horns, the introduction of this fig. assumes acquaintance with Daniel's visions and prophecies. These horns stand here for the heathen nations by whom the Jews had been oppressed.[a] (19) scattered, the expression seems best to be referred to the agents in the Jewish captivity. (20) carpenters, better, *workmasters*, or plowers. fray them,[b] strike terror into them; or to *harry* them. The repression of the enemies was one part of God's merciful dealings with His people.

The castle of Banias.—Two hours later we reached the foot of a tall isolated mountain, which is crowned by the crumbling castle of Banias, the stateliest ruin of that kind on earth, no doubt. It is a thousand feet long and two hundred wide, all of the most symmetrical and at the same time the most ponderous masonry. The massive towers and bastions are more than thirty feet high, and have been sixty. From the mountain's peak its broken turrets rise above the groves of ancient oaks and olives, and look wonderfully picturesque. It is of such high antiquity that no man knows who built it or when it was built. It is utterly inaccessible except in one place, where a bridle-path winds upward among the solid rocks to the old portcullis. The horses' hoofs have bored holes in these rocks to the depth of six inches during the hundreds and hundreds of years that the castle was garrisoned. We wandered for three hours among the chambers and crypts and dungeons of the fortress, and trod where the mailed heels of many a knightly crusader had rung, and where Phœnician heroes had walked ages before them. We wondered how such a solid mass of masonry could be affected even by an earthquake, and could not understand what agency had made Banias a ruin; but we found the destroyer after a while, and then our wonder was increased tenfold. Seeds had fallen in crevices in the vast walls; the seeds had sprouted; the tender, insignificant sprouts had hardened; they grew larger and larger, and by a steady, imperceptible pressure forced the great stones apart, and now are bringing sure destruction upon a

[a] "A prediction of the coming occupation of the land by Jews returning from Babylon, and of the increase of population under the Asmonæan princes." — *Spk. Com.*

Da. ix. 25; Ne. vi. 15, 16.

[b] *T. Moore.*

[a] Poss. the Samaritans, Arabians, Ammonites, and Philistines; or, the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Roman powers; or, these as representing all earthly powers so far as they are hostile to the Church of God.

[b] *Fray*, fr. Fr. *frayer*, Lat. *fricare*, to rub.

Je. l. 8, 9; Eze. xxv. 1.

vv. 18—21. *W. Bridge*, iv. 314; *N. Hornes*, 595.

"So just and wonderful are the overruling councils of God's Providence, that the arrow which strikes through the heart of the transgressor is oftentimes directed from the very bow which he had vainly trusted would be his strength. The companion of his sin is the first to cast reproach and shame on him for the evil which he

has done."—*J. S. M. Anderson.*

giant work that has even mocked the earthquakes to scorn! Gnarled and twisted trees spring from the old walls everywhere, and beautify and overshadow the grey battlements with a wild luxuriance of foliage.[c]

[c] *Mark Twain.*

[a] Eze. xl. 3; Re. xi. 1, xxi. 15, 16.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1, 2. (1) a man, *i.e.* an angel in the form of a man. Or, there may be intended a foreshadowing of the work of Nehemiah. (2) measure, or take necessary measurements, preparatory to rebuilding.[a]

Ministering angels.—That there is an order of beings superior to man, who feel a deep interest in his welfare, is a doctrine which appears quite evident in various parts of Divine Revelation. These beings are called angels; a word in the Hebrew and Greek languages (from which it is derived) signifying a messenger. That they are of different gradations in rank and intelligence appears to be set forth by terms applied to the angelic hosts: such as thrones, dominions, principalities and powers (Col. i. 16). The ancient Jews reckoned four orders or companies of angels, each headed by an archangel; the first order being that of Michael, the second of Gabriel, the third of Uriel, and the fourth of Raphael. Of the creation of man it is stated in Heb. ii. 7, that he was made but a little lower than the angels; and the idea has prevailed in most nations that he has in some manner been connected with them. Their principal employment, however, was to wait upon the Almighty and execute His commands. It has also been a generally prevalent and very ancient opinion that certain classes of angels were appointed to watch over the welfare of the human race; and that every individual had some spirit or angel, either good or bad, who had control over his mind to a greater or less degree. It is well known that something like the above belief universally prevailed among the Jews. Greeks, Romans, and Persians; and indeed among many of the barbarous nations of antiquity. Hesiod, one of the most ancient of the Greek poets, tells us in some of his writings that "the men of the golden age are the good angels of the present degenerate race; they watch near us, protect us from harm, and strive to the utmost of their power to purify our hearts, and save us from misery." Socrates, called the wisest of the heathen philosophers, publicly avowed himself under the guidance of a good genius or spirit, very much in accordance with the Christian idea of a guardian angel. Angels are first spoken of in the Book of Genesis, where two of them appeared for the deliverance of righteous Lot, who dwelt in Sodom, from the fate which overwhelmed the Cities of the Plain for their wickedness. There are also many other accounts in the Old Testament of the appearance of angels among men—sometimes for the deliverance of His chosen people, and at other times for the destruction of their enemies. In the New Testament an angel announced the advent of the Saviour; and a multitude of the heavenly host were heard praising God for the glad tidings of salvation for fallen men. Having assumed the nature of man, the Redeemer became subject to his trials and temptations. After successfully resisting the temptation of the

[a] "Oh! there are no tears in heaven; but, when angels come down to earth, it may be they can fall into companionship with human sadness, and even learn to weep; and where is the spectacle which shall wring tears from eyes which they were never meant to stain, if it be not that of the obstinate rejection of the gospel of reconciliation, and of careless trifling with a thing so inestimably precious as the soul? Old men, buried with your gold, angels weep over you! Young men, frittering away your days in vanities and pleasures, angels weep over you!"—*H. Melvill.*

"We are not able to measure, and far less, as we suppose, to overrate the amount of benefit which results to Christians from these spiritual ministrations. But who will not allow that if, as it was with the Prophet's servant, the eyes were opened to discern the chariot of fire, and the horses of fire marshalled to our protection—who will not allow that we should have a greater sense of security than

devil, angels came and ministered unto Him. In His agony and bloody sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening Him. At His ascension angels were in attendance, and at the day of judgment all the holy angels will be with Him.

3—5. (3) talked .. me, ch. i. 9. another, *i.e.* the other, *v.* 1. (4) run, the sign of alacrity and activity. towns .. walls, *i.e.* the population will so extend that houses must be built beyond the walls, and it will seem like a great unwalled village. That this should be indicates a condition of national peace and security.[a] (5) wall of fire,[b] 2 Ki. vi. 17. glory, Is. iv. 5.

Speak to young men (*v.* 4).—I. Why should young men be an object of especial solicitude? II. Who should speak to young men? III. How should we speak to them? IV. What shall we say to them?—*The wall and glory of Jerusalem* (*v.* 5).—I. The wall—1. Of partition, to separate the Church from the world; 2. Of conjunction, to compact and unite; 3. Of protection, for defence. This wall is terrible and conspicuous, impregnable and invincible, constant and perpetual, active and efficacious. II. The city: God's dwelling place. 1. By His spiritual and gracious residence; 2. By His holy ordinances; 3. By the glorious relations, habits, and privileges. Apply:—(1) What folly to oppose the Church of God; (2) We need not sinful means of protection; (3) Envy not the glory of the world; (4) Hold fast God and His presence.[c]

A wall of fire (*v.* 4).—The promise of God's being to Jerusalem, or His church, a wall of fire, seems to be spoken in allusion to the manner in which travellers in desert parts of the earth defend themselves in the night-time from the attacks of ferocious animals. They place fires in various directions around their encampment. This was our constant practice in the wilds of Africa, when timber to burn could be obtained. While the fires kept burning we were in perfect safety, as no undomesticated animal, however ferocious, will approach near to fire. Something in its brightness seems to give alarm.[d]—*God's care of His people.*—This is an encouraging promise, made to the Jews when in captivity in Babylon, assuring them that they should yet again return to their favourite city, Jerusalem; where God was used to show the tokens of His favour to them, above all people on the face of the earth, and from which they were driven on account of their grievous sins. That city, indeed, now looked desolate, and its walls were broken down, but God yet promised to restore His people, and to protect them; for He was unwilling to give them up to total ruin, if they would repent and turn sincerely to Him. Then they would not have to fear any enemy that might come against them, even if they had no walls to defend the city: "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her," meaning the city of Jerusalem, "a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." "A wall of fire" seems a singular expression to us; for whoever built a wall of fire? But it will be easily understood, by referring to a practice of the Eastern shepherds, who, in order to protect their flocks and tents from the attacks of wild beasts, were accustomed, at night, to make fires all around them, over which the most furious animals always dreaded to pass. Indeed, this custom is still adopted in

[a] "This imagery represents *extent* and *peace*. The prophecy was not accomplished in the literal Jerusalem, but is fulfilled in the spiritual Jerusalem, the City of Peace, the universal Church of Christ, diffused throughout the world, and defended by the Divine protection as with a wall of fire."—*Wordsworth.*

[b] "Our watchman had a fire burning, and I believe this was necessary to keep off the wild animals. This is the custom, not only in the E., but all over the world."—*Gadsby.* Is. xxvi. 1.

vv. 4, 5. *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 353.

v. 5. *Bp. Reynolds*, v. 231; *J. Brine*, 381.

[c] *Bp. Reynolds.*

[d] *Campbell.* "A fire's a good companionable friend, a comfortable friend, who meets your face with welcome glad, and makes the poorest shed as pleasant as a palace. Are you cold? he warms you; weary? he refreshes you; hungry? he doth prepare your food for you. Are you in darkness? he gives light to you; in a strange land? he wears a face that is familiar from your childhood. Are you poor? what matters it to

is ordinarily conveyed through an infusion of fresh vigour into the principle of faith?"—*H. Melvill.*

him; he knows no difference between an emperor and the poorest beggar! Where is the friend, that bears the name of man, will do as much for you?"—*Mary Howitt.*

a "God is very sensible of every injury offered to His people; it is like hurting the eye, which is the most tender and sensible part of the body."—*Lowth.*

Ps. xvii. 8; 2 Th. i. 6.

v. 7. *E. Cooper*, vi. 172.

b Stems and Twigs.

various parts of the world, where there are many wild beasts. How many promises of protection God has graciously given to them that love Him! He is their shield, their buckler, their tower, their "wall of fire." There shall no real evil come nigh them, and He will preserve them to His kingdom and glory through Jesus Christ.

6—9. (6) **Ho**, Is. lv. 1. **flee . . north**, flee back to thine own land from Babylon. **spread**, *etc.*, or scattered you. (7) **deliver thyself**, *i.e.* rise to act, now that Divine providences have made the way. **daughter of Babylon**, Ps. cxxxvii. 8. **after the glory**, of your return. When Israel was safely delivered the nations that oppressed her were to come under Divine judgments. **toucheth . . eye**, De. xxxii. 10.[a] (9) **shake**, in threatening.

The blessedness of Israel and the perils of persecutors (*v.* 8).—I. The subjects of the Lord's concern. 1. A sinful and perverse people; 2. An afflicted and chastened people; 3. A chosen people; 4. A penitent people. II. The intensity of the Divine sympathy. Learn that—1. The sufferings of the saints personally affect the Lord, that He is far more affected by the malice of our enemies than we are; 2. That the Lord feels our woes instantly. III. The perils of prosecutors. IV. The season of vengeance.[b]

10—13. (10) **sing**, *etc.*, Is. xii. 6, liv. 1. (11) **many nations**, Gentiles who will unite to form the new kingdom of Messiah. **know**, by persuasive evidences, and personal experiences. (12) **inherit**, or take actual possession of. (13) **silent**,[a] cease from all your various fears and self-willed schemes. Watch and wait for the will of the Lord. **holy habitation**, De. xxvi. 15; Is. lxiii. 15.

Joy an attribute of Heaven.—Some people are afraid of anything like joy in religion. They have none themselves, and they do not love to see it in others. Their religion is something like the stars, very high and very clear, but very cold. When they see tears of anxiety, or tears of joy, they cry out, Enthusiasm, enthusiasm! "I sat down under His shadow with great delight." Is this enthusiasm? "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." If it be really in sitting under the shadow of Christ, let there be no bounds to our joy. Oh! if God would but open our eyes and give us simple childlike faith to look to Jesus, to sit under His shadow, then would songs of joy arise from all our dwellings. "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice."[b]

v. 13. *W. Strong*, 357.

"Of joys departed, never to return, how painful the remembrance. . . . In that dread moment, how the frantic soul raves round the walls of her clay tenement, runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help—but shrieks in vain!"—*Blair.*

b M'Cheyne.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1, 2. (1) **Joshua**, Hag. i. 1. **standing**, *etc.*, his proper position and attitude in the discharge of high-priestly duties. **Satan**, the word is better trans. an *adversary* or *accuser*.[a] **right hand**, the position taken by the accuser in a court of justice. (2) **rebuke thee**, silence thee, bec. it may not even be questioned whether Jerusalem is Jehovah's choice. **brand . . fire**,[b] a proverbial expression, comp. Am. iv. 11.

Plucked from the burning (*v.* 2).—I. The natural state of man

a Re. xii. 10.

"Satan suggested to the Jews that so consciously polluted a priesthood and people could offer no acceptable sacrifice to God, and therefore they

as a sinner, a brand. 1. Worthless; 2. The perilousness of his condition; 3. The commencement of his destruction. II. The deliverance he experiences in the day of his conversion. III. The means by which this change is accomplished. IV. The surprise it produces. V. What ought to be the sentiments of those who have experienced this deliverance.[c]—*A Scripture object lesson.*—Objects: A charred stick, taken, if convenient, from the ruins of some burnt building; if not, prepared for the purpose. A napkin. A pocket knife. Subject: The plucked brand. I. The sinner's danger. The noble house which God builded to be a temple for the spirit is ruined. The soul consumed by sinful lusts; separate from God; under the curse of the law; sentenced, etc. (see Is. xxxiii. 14; Mk. ix. 44). This is the doom of guilty men. Unless the sinner be delivered, he is lost for ever. II. The sinner's safety. Jesus Christ bears in His own body the curse; plucks the soul from the fire by His loving hand; quenches the smoking embers of sin by His grace. [Take up the brand, as if to represent the sinner plucked from the burning.] III. The sinner saved. 1. He still bears the marks of sin, you can see he has been in the fire; he has no comeliness of outer life; his influence still is bad, just as this brand blackens my hand and mars this napkin. [Proof by experiment.] Can this state of things be improved? Let us see. [Cut off the charred surface until the white wood appears.] What do we see? Yes, the black disappears, and the pure, clean wood comes out. Christ not only saves us from death, but He, at the same time, takes away our sin. He is "the Lord our righteousness." We shall never be wholly perfect here; but it is our duty, by the help of God, to cut off every possible mark and trace of sin from our characters. "Be ye perfect;" that is the end toward which we all should strive. Cut off your sins, children. [The napkin may now be applied to the brand without being soiled.] 2. One thing more: the future state of the changed sinner. I have seen in houses, as I passed, charred boards and blackened bricks nailed and built into the walls again. They have been saved from the fire, and now were once more filling their place in the homes of men. So Jesus takes the sinner, the brand plucked out of the fire, and builds him into His glorious spiritual temple. May we all have a part and place there. (*a*) How grateful the Christian should be for Christ's love and salvation! (*b*) "If the righteous scarcely can be saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" The following division of the above address may also be made. (1) The charred stick, bearing the marks of sin. (2) The soiled hands, spreading the marks of sin. (3) The cut stick, removing the marks of sin. (4) The rebuilt house, repairing the work of sin.[d]

A countryman's conversion.—A plain countryman, who was effectually called by Divine grace under a sermon from Ze. iii. 2, was some time afterwards accosted by a quondam companion of his drunken fits, and strongly solicited to accompany him to the alehouse. But the good man strongly resisted all his arguments, saying, "I am a brand plucked out of the fire." His old companion not understanding this, he explained it thus:—"Look ye," said he, "there is a great difference between a brand and a green stick; if a spark flies upon a brand that has been partly

might as well desist from the building of the temple."—*Fausset.*

b "A small remnant, rescued from destruction, like a brand plucked out of the fire."—*Lowth.*

vv. 1, 2. *Bp. Reynolds*, v. 184.

vv. 1—5. *Dr. Gordon*, iv. 385.

vv. 1—8. *F. Arnold*, 264.

v. 2. *T. Pierce*, 200; *B. Beddome*, iv. 160; *J. Jowett*, 337; *F. Close*, ii. 120.

c W. Jay.

A minister of the Gospel one day saw a piece of ivy entwined round a brand in the fire. He took it out, planted it in front of his house. It took root, grew, grew higher, and spread wider, until it covered the front most luxuriantly, forming a beautiful ornament, and admired by the passers-by. To all inquiries he gives the history of its planting and growth, and then asks the question, "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?"

d H. C. McCook.

"When a man has had a very narrow escape from danger or from death, he is called a fire-brand! Thus, when the cholera rages, should only one in a family escape, he is named "the fire-brand." When a

person talks of selling his property in consequence of not having an heir, people say, 'Sell it not, there will be yet a firebrand to inherit it.' 'Alas! alas! my relations are all dead, I am a firebrand.' "-*Roberts.*

burned, it will soon catch fire again; but it is not so with a green stick. I tell you, I am that brand plucked out of the fire, and I dare not venture into the way of temptation, for fear of being set on fire."[c]—*The Saviour of the sinner.*—A wild Indian convert has given us a striking comment on this text. An American missionary having one day overtaken one of these "babes in Christ" in the woods, accosted him with "Tell me what your heart says of Jesus." The Indian stood still, paused awhile, and then replied, "Stop, and I will show you." Stooping down, he gathered some dry leaves into a circle, in the middle of which he left an open space, and dropped a worm into it: he then set fire to the leaves. The flames quickly ran round them, and the poor insect, beginning to feel the heat, writhed and wriggled about in all directions, seeking in vain some way of escape from the torment. At last, exhausted with its fruitless efforts, it sank motionless. The Indian stretched out his hand, lifted up the worm, and laid it on the cool ground, beyond the reach of its place of torture. "This Jesus did for me," said the Indian; "and this is what my heart tells me I owe to Him."

c Whitecross.

3—5. (3) **filthy garments,** as representative of a sinful people. (4) **take . . him,** as the sign of his justification and acceptance.[a] (5) **fair mitre,**[b] Heb. *tsâniph*, the head-dress of priests and kings.

Filthy garments (*v.* 3).—It was usual, especially among the Romans, when a man was charged with a capital crime, and during his arraignment, to let down his hair, suffer his beard to grow long, to wear filthy ragged garments. and appear in a very dirty and sordid habit; on account of which they were called *sordidati*. When the person accused was brought into court to be tried, even his near relations, friends. and acquaintances, before the court voted, appeared with dishevelled hair, and clothed with garments foul and out of fashion, weeping, crying, and deprecating punishment. The accused sometimes appeared before the judges clothed in black, and his head covered with dust. In allusion to this ancient custom, the Prophet Zechariah represents Joshua, the high priest, when he appeared before the Lord, and Satan stood at his right hand to accuse him, as clothed with filthy garments. After the cause was carefully examined, and all parties impartially heard, the public crier, by command of the presiding magistrate, ordered the judges to bring in their verdict."[c]—The words, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee," brought to bear on the parable of the prodigal son, make it probable that by the bringing out of the best robe and putting it upon him is especially signified the act of God, which, considered on its negative side, is a release from condemnation; a causing of the sinner's iniquity to pass from him; on its positive side is an imputation to him of the merits and righteousness of his Lord.[d]

[a] "When the people in the E. are in deep distress, or when they have been charged with some capital crime, it is customary for them not to wash themselves, but to allow the dirt to accumulate both on their person and dress. The angel of the Lord ordered the officers or justice to take his filthy garments off, as a mark of his *acquittal*, and to clothe him with a change of raiment, as an emblem of his *justification.*"-*Gadsby.*

[b] Rend. *diadem*, Job xxix. 14; Is. lxii. 3

c Paxton.

d Trench.

6, 7. (6) **protested,** or declared in a very solemn manner. (7) **charge,** or ordinance.[a] **judge my house,** rule my temple. **places . . by,**[b] free ingress and egress in the execution of thy priesthood.

The Bible and true greatness (*v.* 7).—I. The Bible directs us to the sphere of true greatness. II. The Bible directs us to the

Used in the Bk. of Num. to denote the offices and duties of priests and Levites.

[b] For the term

path of true greatness. III. The Bible gives us the guarantee for true greatness.[c]

8—10. (8) men wondered at, or men set for a sign, or type.[a] "Their intercessory office makes them types of the great Intercessor. the branch,[b] Je. xxiii. 5; Is. iv. 2. Heb. *tsemach*. (9) stone, *i.e.* the chief, or foundation-stone.[c] seven eyes, the number implies the perfection of the Divine vision. (10) under the vine, 1 Ki. iv. 25.

Gospel blessings (*v.* 10).—I. The blessings of Christ's kingdom include—1. Perfect security; 2. Unalloyed happiness; 3. Religious zeal; 4. Christian love.

Meals out of doors (*v.* 10).—The Oriental banquet, in consequence of the intense heat, is often spread upon the verdant turf, beneath the shade of a tree, where the streaming rivulet supplies the company with wholesome water, and excites a gentle breeze to cool their burning temples. The vine and the fig, it appears from the faithful page of inspiration, are preferred on such joyous occasions.

walk see Eze. xlii. 4.

c Dr. Thomas.

a "They are men to be gazed at with wonder, because they typify a great mystery, which was no other than the incarnation and everlasting priesthood of Jesus the Son of God." — *Wordsworth.*

b The Alex. Jews trans. this word the sunrise, the dayspring from on high.

c Ps. cxviii. 22; Is. xxviii. 16.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—4. (1) waked me, from trance. (2) candlestick,[a] fig. of the Jewish service and polity. bowl,[b] *comp.* Ex. xxvii. 20, 21. seven pipes, to convey new oil from the olive trees. (3) olive trees, living sources of fresh oil.[c] In a secret and unperceived manner these supplied the bowls. (4) spake, better, *said.*

Shining lamps (*v.* 2).—There are four things necessary to a lamp's giving light properly. 1. They must be lighted; 2. They must be set; 3. They must be fed; 4. They must be trimmed. Apply:—(1) Have you lamps? (2) Are you lamps?[d]

a Ex. xxv. 31—39.

b A vessel to store the oil.

c "The oil is supplied by God Himself through the olive trees, which represent the functions of Christ, who is the great High Priest and King." —*Wordsworth.*

d Dr. Edmond.

5—7. (5) knowest, *etc.*, as if the Prophet's spiritual discernment should have discovered the meaning. (6) Zerubbabel, who was to be encouraged to undertake the rebuilding of the temple. not by might, or mere human force. by my spirit,[a] a sure, lasting but secret strengthening and replenishing, like that of the olive trees. (7) great mountain, of difficulty and hindrance. All mountain-like obstacles. headstone, or *top-stone*, the sign of the completion of the building.[b]

The increase of God (*v.* 6).—I. The machinery. 1. A wealthy Church; 2. A popular policy; 3. An eloquent ministry; 4. Efficient appliances. II. The motive power. God's Spirit—1. Must provide the means; 2. Must qualify the agents; 3. Must give efficiency.[c]—*The work and the workers.*—Explain the history. Here was a great work to be done. I. We have all a great work to do—1. For ourselves; 2. For others. II. What have we wherewith to do this? Our might of mind and power of resolve not enough. Divine help needful. "My spirit." III. Those who are naturally of the weakest, become strong with this help. God's heroes (see Heb. xi.) were, by this Spirit, clothed with might in the inner man, and became strong.[d]

a "The secret assistance of My providence." —*Lowth.*

b Ezr. iii. 11, vi. 15.

v. 6. *Bp. Reynolds*, v. 319; *H. T. Day*, 35; *Dr. W. Wilson*, 85; *Bp. Vidal*, 375; *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 389.

vv. 6, 7. *J. Hyatt*, 190; *C. Bradley*, ii. 370.

c W. Whythe.

d Hive.

8—10. (8, 9) his hands, a gracious assurance wh. would greatly encourage Zerubbabel.[a] (10) small things,[b] or beginnings. The unfinished temple, and the feeble and depressed condition of the people. plummet, used in actual building

a Ezr. v. 2, vi. 14, 15.

b Comp. Mat. xiii. 31, 32.

operations, as the line for measuring out the ground. those seven, the eyes wh. were the symbol of the Divine presence and aid. run . . earth, ch. iii. 9.

Nothing trifling (*v.* 10).—I. Natural trifles yielding great results. 1. The seed; 2. The spark; 3. The mountain stream; 4. The child. II. Providential trifles issuing in great lives. 1. Scripture examples; 2. Secular. III. Historical trifles producing great revolutions. 1. Introduction of the Gospel; 2. The Reformation; 3. Denominational beginnings; 4. Missionary enterprises.[c]—*The day of small things* (*v.* 10).—1. Little errors not to be overlooked; 2. Small sins not to be indulged; 3. The beginnings of grace not to be contemned; 4. Slight means not to be neglected; 5. Weak Christians not to be despised; 6. A rising cause not to be despaired of.

Small things (*v.* 10).—The margin has, instead of "they shall rejoice," "or since the seven eyes of the Lord shall" (iii. 9, "Seven eyes"). Dr. Boothroyd says, these eyes represent "the perfect oversight and providence of God," which I doubt not is the true meaning. It is a curious fact that the sun which shines seven times in the course of the week is spoken of as the "seven eyes" of the Deity, because there is an eye for each day. Thus. the Sunday, the "first eye" of God shines, and so on through the rest of the days. In the 9th verse mention is made of laying the foundation stone of a temple for Jehovah, and again in the 10th verse it is asked, "Who hath despised the day of small things?" saying it is only the foundation, this is a small beginning: fear not, for the "seven eyes" of the Lord are over the work. His good providence shall accomplish the whole, because He has an eye for each day of the week. Has a man suffered a great evil, has an antagonist triumphed over another, either in a court of justice or any other way, he says, in talking about his misfortunes, "God has lost His eyes, or I should not have fallen into this trouble." "Well, friend, how is this? I hear you have gained the day." "True, true, the eyes of God were upon me." Should there not have been rain for some time, the people say, "God has no eyes in these days," *i.e.* He does not take care of us. In the book *Neethe-veanpa* it is said, "To all there are two eyes; to the learned there are three; to the giver of alms there are seven eyes (alluding to each day); but to those who through penance have received gracious gifts there are innumerable eyes."[d]—*Great results from small beginnings.*—A boy overheard his mother say she had dedicated him to the service of God as a missionary. That boy was Samuel J. Mills. When he was converted his mind was turned towards missions. He was wont to hold a prayer meeting with some other students in a grove. A thunderstorm drove them to take shelter under a neighbouring haystack; and there, amid the storm, the question of missions was discussed. It was not a missionary age. One of the five present relates that "Mills proposed to send the Gospel to that dark and heathen land (Asia), and said we could do it if we would." It was made a subject of prayer while the dark clouds were passing away, and the clear sky breaking out after the storm. They prayed together earnestly, and the young men founded a society, the object of which was "to effect in the person of its members a mission to the heathen." This led to the formation of the American Board of Foreign Missions.

v. 10. *J. Mede*, i. 53; *G. Whitefield*, vi. 369; *W. Jay*, ii. 180; *Dr. E. Payson*, ii. 507; *J. C. Miller*, 176; *J. Foster*, ii. 365.

[c] *W. Whythe.*

"The little coral insects that build up the beautiful islands which stud the face of the Southern Sea work, we are told, for ages in the dark caves of the ocean, regardless of their perishing in obscurity long before their graceful architecture even begins to peep above the surface of the waters; but each content to contribute its tiny labours to hasten on the final consummation, when its isle of beauty shall stand complete like a gem on the bosom of the deep, crowned with verdure and fertility, and teeming with life and abundance. So is it with those who labour under the guidance of Providence for the accomplishment of some remote good. They may work on for generations in obscurity and contempt, conscious only that they are working in harmony with the plans of God, and that they are helping in bringing to pass those scenes of blessedness and peace upon which humanity, even in its darkest moments, has loved to rejoice in hope."—*Peace Society's Report*, 1859.

[d] *Roberts.*

Such was its small beginning. Five only assembled at its first meeting, seven at its second. Thousands are now assembled at its annual meetings. Its missions are in almost all parts of the globe: "1,258 missionaries, ordained and unordained, male and female, have been sent out." They have formed 149 churches, and have gathered at least 55,000 church members. It has 369 schools, containing more than 10,000 children. It has raised nations from the lowest forms of heathenism to Christian civilisation. —"*They've forgotten the rope.*"—A tall chimney had been completed, and the scaffolding was being removed. One man remained on the top to superintend the process. A rope should have been left for him to descend by. His wife was at home washing, when her little boy burst in with "Mother, mother, they've forgotten the rope, and he's going to throw himself down!" She paused—her lips moved in the agony of prayer—and she rushed forth. A crowd were looking up to the poor man, who was moving round and round the narrow cornice, terrified and bewildered! He seemed as if at any moment he might fall, or throw himself down in despair. His wife from below cried out—"Wait a bit, John!" The man became calm. "Take off thy stocking—unravel the worsted." And he did so. "Now tie the end to a bit of mortar and lower gently." Down came the thread and the bit of mortar, swinging backwards and forwards. Lower and lower it descended, eagerly watched by many eyes; it was now within reach, and was gently seized by one of the crowd. They fastened some twine to the thread. "Now pull up." The man got hold of the twine. The rope was now fastened on. "Pull away again." He at length seized the rope and made it secure. There were a few moments of suspense, and then, amidst the shouts of the people, he threw himself into the arms of his wife, sobbing—"Thou'st saved me, Mary." The worsted thread was not despised—it drew after it the twine, the rope, the rescue! Ah, my friend, thou mayest be sunk very low down in sin and woe, but there is a thread of Divine love, that comes from the throne of heaven, and touches even thee. Seize that thread. It may be small, but it is golden. Improve what you have, however little, and more shall be given. That thin thread of love, if you will not neglect it, shall lift even you up to God and glory. "Who hath despised the day of small things?"

11—14. (11) **what .. trees.** (12) **pipes,** *etc.*, *v.* 3. The Prophet noticed the peculiarity that the trees fed the bowls without any pressing of the hand of man. (13) **knowest,** *etc.*, see note on *v.* 5. (14) **anointed ones,** the kingdom and the priesthood,[a] represented by Zerubbabel and Joshua. This, however, was only a part of their symbolism.[b]

The vision of the olive trees (*vv.* 11—14).—I. The import of the vision. 1. The general scope of it is declared by God Himself; 2. The particular parts of it will be found to bear upon this point with much power. II. The instruction to be derived from it. 1. That Christ is by His office qualified to support and perfect His Church; 2. That the fulness which is in Him is expressly committed to Him for the use and benefit of His Church; 3. That in the use of His ordinances we may expect the needed supplies; 4. That however low our state may be, or powerful our enemies, His grace shall be sufficient for us.

"We see this illustrated in the world of nature, and in the world of grace. The little hummingbird, the little gnat, the little violet, the little minnow, the little mite, the little atom, He makes use of in a wise and beautiful manner in creation, for the manifestation of His glory. So He does in grace. The little promise, the little faith, the little talent, all have their place, and are used by Him for His glory."—*John Bate.*

"It is a little thing to give a cup of water; yet its draught of cool refreshment, drained by fevered lips, may give a shock of pleasure to the soul more exquisite by far than when nectareous juice renews the life of joy in happiest hours."—*Talfourd.*

a "The appointed means and channels by wh. the favour and grace of God were conveyed and bestowed on the Heb. people."—*Wordsworth.*

b Re. xi. 3, 4.

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1, 2. (1) **flying roll,** or book unrolled and spread out. (2) **twenty . . cubits,** the size of the Holy Place in the Tabernacle, and of the porch in Sol.'s temple.[a] The roll is a symbol of a solemn warning.

The flying roll seen by Zechariah.—The roll indicates the form in which books were formerly written—not in separate leaves, and bound in pasteboard and leather backs, as ours are at the present day, but the skins of goats, or some other animal, having been dried and cut into square pieces, were attached together, and made to extend to a length of several yards. Then one end was fastened to a roller, and the whole was rolled up just as we roll up a map. Indeed, our word volume comes from this ancient usage of forming a book by rolling it up; for the word volume means a something rolled up. The roll which Zechariah saw was such a volume, and it was a very large one, being twenty cubits, or thirty feet, in length, and ten cubits, or fifteen feet, in breadth. All this space was written on full of the curses or threatenings of God against sinful men. Now God has recorded His threatenings as well as His promises, for He is alike faithful in the fulfilment of both. But the passage speaks of the roll flying, and what is meant by this? It seems simply that when the Prophet saw the roll it seemed to be moving swiftly across the heavens—thereby indicating that, as the roll was not stationary, so God's judgments against wicked men are not for one place only, but for all places where sin reigns; and as the roll moved swiftly, so God's judgments were not to be long delayed, but to be speedily poured forth on the guilty nations.[b]

3, 4. (3) **curse,** or rather, the document on wh. the curse is inscribed. For judgments denounced against the Jews see De. xxvii. 15—26, xxviii. 15—68. **sweareth,** *i.e.* falsely, *v.* 4. (4) **it forth,** *i.e.* the judgment. Representing the judgment as if it were a leprosy cleaving to the man and to his house.[a]

Systematic robberies by a boy.—The *Warrington Guardian* reports a case of juvenile thieving, which has been before the magistrates of Northwich. Alfred Heywood, a youth fourteen years old, late in the employ of Mr. Harvey, grocer, was charged with stealing £250 from his employers. His father and mother were also charged with receiving the same, knowing it to have been stolen. The younger prisoner had been in Mr. Harvey's service for two years and a half, and the prosecutor had repeatedly found his cash returns smaller than they ought to be. Mr. Harvey handed in two papers which he had received from the boy, in which the lad explains how he was led on by his mother. In these documents he says: "When I commenced taking money I took a penny and spent it, and then I took 3d., and spent that, then I took 6d., and then I kept taking more till I got up to 4s. and 5s., and then I gave that to my mother, who said to me, why, I want so and so, and could you get it for me, and then I said yes—and I will send Jane or Ann down, and I have said yes. And my father and mother said to me, why, we have got no bread in the house, and I have said well, send

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[a] *Wordsworth.* "The dimensions of the roll seem to have no special meaning beyond implying that it was a roll of great magnitude."—*Spk. Com.* Eze. ii. 9, 10.

"Books are a part of man's prerogative; in formal ink they thoughts and voices hold, that we to them our solitude may give, and make time present travelled that of old. Our life, fame pierceth longer at the end, and books it farther backward do extend."—*Overbury.*

[b] *Rev. W. Cooke, D.D.*

[a] Comp. the oracle at Delphi against the perjurer: "The curse shall swiftly enter, and shall bring the man himself and all his house to ruin." Pr. iii. 33; Is. xxiv. 5, 6.

"It is said that a prisoner standing at the bar, indicted for felony, was asked by the judge what he could say for himself. 'Truly, my lord,' says he, 'I did mean no hurt when I stole; it is an evil custom that I have gotten; I have been used to it ever since I knew anything.'—'Why, then,' says the judge, 'if it be thy custom to

them down at such a time, and they have come down. I have given them some flour and other things that has been at when they have had no money. Then when I have gone home at nights. You must not send down, for I am afraid lessted I should be seen. Well then they have not sent down again, the have not sent down again sometimes a week, and when I have got home at nights my mother has said to me, what must we do, we have nothing to eat; well, I have said, you will have to send down again, and I have told them to wait in some place till I call them in, when the have gone in to dinner or tea, or any time when the have gone out. Sometimes I hav been sent out, and then I have told them to come down, and then they have gone home again, and sometime they have waited beside the post office, sometimes at the top of the street, sometimes besides Mr. Willis shop, and when I have wanted them to come in, I have gone to the door and beconed them in.—I am your affectionate ALFRED HEYWOOD. Sept. 30th, 1861."

	£ s.	£ s.
"I think for the first 12 months	2 10	120 0
„ „ 18 months	2 15	132 0
To my best recollection		£252 0

I am guilty of stealing a large amount of money, but it was my father and mother that persuaded me to it; for when I commenced I took a penny, and I kept on till I got to this large sum; but now I intend to begin a new life, and to be perfect and upright in all my future life. I am gilty stealing this large sum of Mr. Harvey.—I am now your affectionate servant, ALFRED HEYWOOD.—Sept. 30th, 1868." The parents admitted having received money from the boy, but denied that it was any large amount, and said they believed he had earned it by running errands. They were all committed for trial.

5—7. (5, 6) **ephah**, lit. *the* ephah, the full measure of iniquity. A vessel or barrel made in the shape of an ephah.[a] **their resemblance**, or the thing that their iniquity is like. (7) **lifted . . lead**, a heavy leaden cover: a round piece of lead, so heavy that the woman inside,[b] who is the personification of the national wickedness, cannot escape from the pressure.

Angels: objects of their ministry.—Their ministry relates especially to believers; (Heb. i. 14) "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Ps. xxxiv. 7) "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear Him." (Ps. xci. 11) "He shall give His angels charge over thee." (Isa. lxiii. 9) "The angel of His presence saved them." (Matt. xviii. 10) "Their angels do always behold the face of My Father." (Matt. xiii. 41) "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend." (xxiv.) "They shall gather together His elect from the four winds." (Acts xii. 15) "It is his angel." (1 Cor. xi. 13) "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels," namely, as some think (and numerous examples, in confirmation of their opinion, are not wanting), those angels whose office it was to be present at the religious assemblies of believers.[c]

8—11. (8) **this is**, or this ephah with the woman in it represents "wickedness."[a] **it**, the woman, or the wickedness. **cast**

steal, it is my custom to hang up thieves.'"—*Spencer.*

A gentleman of Boston was unfortunate in business thirty years ago, and unable at that time to meet his engagements with his creditors. After more than twenty years of toil, he succeeded in paying the whole amount due to every creditor, except one, whose residence he could not find. His mind was not at rest until he found that the party had died several years before. He found, however, his administrator, and remitted the whole amount, principal and interest.

a "An ephah being the measure of dry things, denotes the Jews' unjust dealings in buying and selling."—*Lowth.*

b Re. xvii. 18.

"We may suppose a troop of heavenly beings entrusted with the guardianship of one of God's people, and when this individual is in circumstances of danger, or perplexity, or sorrow, we may believe that these attendant spirits do much towards removing obstacles from his path, directing him as to the best course to take, or suggesting material of comfort and of hope."—*H. Melvill.*

c *Milton.*

a "The article is

emphatic, implying the lawlessness and wantonness which had prevailed in Judah, and which is to be borne away into the land of Shinar, the home of lawless and licentious men."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The capital of the God-opposed world kingdoms, and so representing in general the seat of irreligion."—*Fausset.*

"Wickedness or lawlessness is carried to Babylon, and is settled there, because at Babylon is its proper place."—*S. Jerome.*

A thousand liveried angels lackey her, driving far off each thing of sin and guilt, and in clear dream and solemn vision, tell her of things that no gross ear can hear; till oft converse with heavenly habitants begins to cast a beam on the outward shape.

c Paxton.

. . thereof, sealing it down for judgment. (9) two women, poss. symbolising the two agents in the captivities, Assyria and Babylon. wings, *comp.* De. xxviii. 49. (10, 11) house, or place of resting. land of Shinar,[b] regarded as the natural home of "wickedness."

A vision of the future (*v.* 9).—In the vision of which these words are a part, the Prophet beheld, in fearful perspective, the future calamities of his nation. The ephah represented the measure of iniquity which the Jews were fast filling up by their increasing enormities. The woman whom he saw sitting in the midst of the ephah, signified the Jewish nation in their degenerate state; this woman the angel calls wickedness, the abstract being put for the concrete, the wicked people of the Jews, to whom God was about to render according to their works. Into the ephah the woman is thrust down, and a talent of lead cast upon the mouth of it, to keep her a close prisoner; denoting that the condemned sinner who has filled up the measure of his iniquity can neither escape from the curse of God, nor endure the misery which it inflicts. The ephah containing this mystical woman, he now sees carried away into a far country; that is, the nation of the Jews overthrown, their civil and religious polity extinguished, their temple burned, their priests slain, and the poor remains of their people scattered over the face of all the earth. This great and terrible destruction is accomplished by the Roman emperors, Vespasian and Titus, symbolised by "two women who had wings like a stork," which are sufficiently powerful to waft that bird to a very distant country. These symbolical women lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven; which was fulfilled when the Roman armies, with a rapidity resembling the flight of a bird of passage, came up against the Jews, now ripe for destruction, and swept them from the land of their fathers into regions far remote, from which they were not, as in the first captivity, to return after seventy years, but to remain in a state of depression and suffering for many generations. Under the curse of incensed heaven they still remain, and must do so, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and then all Israel shall be saved.[c]

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—4. (1) four chariots, the emblem of conquerors, denoting the great empires of that age.[a] between two mountains, prob. Zion and Moriah are intended. Or the allusion may be more general, to mountains as the natural barriers dividing kingdoms, and the valleys bet. the mountains as the highways of invaders. brass, the symbol of might.[b] (2) red, *etc.*, comp. ch. i. 8, colour for bloodshed. black, the colour for mourning. (3) white, prob. representing the kindness of Alexander, and the Maced. monarchy, to the Jews. grisled and bay, the Rom. empire. Comp. Da. ii. 42. (4) angel, ch. i. 9.

Blessedness of the angels.—

The multitude of angels, with a shout
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices uttering joy. Heaven rung

a Da. ii. 31—35, vii. 3—7. "The number *four* represents completeness as to space."—*Wordsworth.*

b "The metal among the ancients representing hard solidity; so the immovable and resistless firmness of God's people."—*Fausset.* "The secret purpose of God from eternity does not

With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
The eternal regions : lowly reverent
Toward either throne they bow, and to the ground,
With solemn adoration down they cast
Their crowns inwove with amaranth and gold.[c]

Angels.—
They are God's ministering spirits, and are sent,
His messengers of mercy, to fulfil
Good for salvation's heirs. For us they still
Grieve when we sin, rejoice when we repent:
And on the last dread day they shall present
The severed righteous at His holy hill,
With them God's face to see, to do His will,
And bear with them His likeness.[d]

5—8. (5) **spirits**, better, *winds*, as Divine agents.[a] Reference is to national changes and revolutions, which are, as it were, messengers, or agencies, sent forth from God, and presided over by Him. **standing**, *etc.*, as servants waiting their Lord's bidding. (6) **north country**, usual term for Babylon. **after them**, to follow up and complete their work. **south country**, *i.e.* Egypt.[b] (7) **bay**, or prob. *dark red.* Poss. alluding to the Goths and Vandals, whose power rose out of the ruins of the first Rom. empire. (8) **quieted**, or satisfied. This was done by the full execution of the Divine judgment. **spirit**, Heb. *ruach*, often used to signify *anger*.

The midnight wind.—
Mournfully ! oh, mournfully
This midnight wind doth sigh,
Like some sweet plaintive melody
Of ages long gone by !
It speaks a tale of other years,
Of hopes that bloom'd to die,
Of sunny smiles that set in tears,
And loves that mouldering lie !

Mournfully ! oh, mournfully
This midnight wind doth moan !
It stirs some chord of memory
In each dull, heavy tone ;
The voices of the much-loved dead
Seem floating thereupon—
All, all my fond heart cherish'd
Ere death hath made it lone.

Mournfully ! oh, mournfully
This midnight wind doth swell,
With its quaint pensive minstrelsy,
Hope's passionate farewell
To the dreamy joys of early years,
Ere yet grief's canker fell
On the heart's bloom—ay ! well may tears
Start at that parting knell ![c]

9—11. (10) **of them**, better, *from them.* Take silver and gold from them. **Heldai**, *etc.*, the persons employed to offer the people's gifts toward the rebuilding of the temple.[a] **house of**

come forth to view before the execution, but is hidden and kept back irresistibly till the fit time, as it were, between lofty mountains; the chariots are the various changes wrought in nations, which, as swift heralds, announce to us what before we knew not."—*Calvin.*

c Milton.

d Bishop Mant.

a Comp. Je. xlix. 36.

b Da. xi. 6.

"Egypt was the last country the Romans subdued under Augustus, whereby they became masters of the greatest part of the known world."—*Lowth.*

"How absolute and omnipotent is the silence of night! And yet the stillness seems almost audible! From all the measureless depths of air around us comes a half-sound, a half-whisper, as if we could hear the crumbling and falling away of earth and all created things, in the great miracle of nature, decay and reproduction, ever beginning never ending—the gradual lapse and running of the sand in the great hour glass of time."—*Longfellow.*

c Motherwell.

a "Sent as bearers of contributions towards the restoration of the temple fr. Jews still re-

maining in Babylon."—*Keil.*

b "No time was to be lost to mark the significancy of their coming from afar to offer gifts to the temple, typifying in the double crown made of their gifts, and set on Joshua's head, the gathering in of Israel's outcasts to Messiah hereafter, who shall then be recognised as the true King and Priest."—*Fausset.*

a "The building of God's spiritual temple, the Church, was a work reserved for the Messiah."—*Lowth.*

b "Neither will the regal office overshadow the sacerdotal nor the sacerdotal the regal."—*Spk. Com.*

c T. Spencer.

a Is. lx. 10.

"It is not enough to begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh; it is not for him that runneth, but for him that runneth to the end, that persevereth, that the crown is reserved; it is he that shall eat of the hidden manna,—he that shall have the white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it."—*Spencer.*

b Percy Anec.

Josiah, where these men were lodging. (11) crowns,[b] *i.e.* two crowns, or the double crown of the king and the priest. "Circlets of silver and gold, forming one tiara."

A jewelled crown.—A retiring young disciple, who shrank from labour for Jesus, had a dream, which she thus relates: "I thought I was in heaven; and I saw there two crowns,—one plain, and the other jewelled. I thought, "Oh! if I may but wear the plainest crown, I shall be satisfied, and ask or wish for nothing more." But, as I spoke my thoughts to myself, one of the bright-winged company came to me, and said, "It is your duty to wear a jewelled crown;" and when I thought of my advantages, my Christian friends, my means of religious improvement and usefulness, I saw it was not right that I should be content with a bare entrance into heaven, but mine must indeed be a jewelled crown."

12, 13. (12) The Branch, ch. iii. 8, the Messiah, whom Joshua was to represent. out . . place, or from under him, as a twig out of the stock of a tree. he shall build, in a first sense Joshua, but in the full and higher sense, Messiah.[a] (13) the glory, *i.e.* the full glory of both the regal and the priestly offices. Messiah would be both King and Priest. counsel of peace, *i.e.* there would be no clashing of jurisdictions, bec. both offices would be united in one person.[b]

The glory of Christ (*v.* 13).—I. Jesus Christ is abundantly glorified by both the other Divine persons in the Trinity. II. By the engagements of the angelic world. III. He receives a revenue of glory from the ministry of the Gospel. IV. From the conduct of all His saints. V. From the dispensations of His Providence. VI. From the acclamations of the glorified spirits in heaven.[c]

14, 15. (14) Helem, or *Heldai.* Hen, this word is better trans. "the grace or kindness of Zephaniah's son." memorial, of the promise of Messiah wh. had been given in connection with them. (15) far off, distant nations, symbolised by these emissaries from Babylon.[a] A first reference may be to the fact that other Jews shall return from Babylon bringing aid to the present work of rebuilding the temple.

Race for a crown.—In the year 776, on the death of Premislaus, or Lescus I., King of Poland, the people, to determine who should succeed, appointed a race, and declared whoever won it should be king. On this, one of the candidates secretly strewed iron hooks in certain parts of the course, by which, on the day of competition, the horses of all the other candidates were lamed; while he, knowing how to avoid them, came first to the goal. The fraud, however, being discovered, he was killed on the spot; and a poor fellow called Lescus, who had run the race on foot, being next to the impostor, the people saluted him prince. It is said that he always kept his mean clothes to remind him of his humble origin.[b]—*A lost crown.*—A lady in a dream wandered around heaven, beholding its glories, and came at last to the crown-room. Among the crowns, she saw one exceedingly beautiful. "Whom is this for?" "It was intended for you," said the angel; "but you did not labour for it, and now another will wear it."

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1—3. (1) **fourth year,** B.C. 518. Two years later than the previous visions.[a] **Chisleu,** or *Kisleu*, the name in use after the captivity. (2) **pray,** *Heb.* "entreat the face of the Lord." To inquire God's will in the matter of the fastings. (3) **priests . . prophets,** through whom they might expect the Divine will to be communicated. **weep,** as in a time of humiliation.[b] **separating myself,** from food, etc. **done . . years,** there is some self-confident boasting in these words.[c]

Use of tears.—

Be not thy tears too harshly chid,
Repine not at the rising sigh:
Who, if they might, would always bid
The breast be still, the cheek be dry?

How little of ourselves we know
Before a grief the heart has felt!
The lessons that we learn of woe
May brace the mind as well as melt.

The energies too stern for mirth,
The reach of thought, the strength of will,
'Mid cloud and tempest have their birth,—
Through blight and blast their course fulfil.

Love's perfect triumph never crown'd
The hope unchequered by a pang;
The gaudiest wreaths with thorns are bound,
And Sappho wept before she sang.

Tears at each pure emotion flow;
They wait on Pity's gentle claim,
On admiration's fervid glow,
On Piety's seraphic flame.

'Tis only when it mourns and fears
The loaded spirit feels forgiven,
And through the mist of falling tears
We catch the clearest glimpse of heaven.[d]

4—7. (4, 5) **fasted,** *etc.*, comp. Is. lviii. 5. **seventh month,** "prob. on account of Gedaliah."[a] **to me,** Hag. i. 4. Was it really religious fasting, the sign of a true heart-penitence?[b] (6) **for yourselves,** for your own self-pleasing. You neither honoured Me in your feeding or in your fasting. (7) **south,** the *Negeb*.[c] **the plain,** Heb. *Shephelah*, the maritime district.[d]

Outward services vain without obedience (*vv.* 4—7).—I. Inquire into the principles by which we have been actuated in our religious duties. 1. To whom ought we to have performed all our religious services? 2. To whom have we performed them? II. Show what practice is necessary to the acceptance of them before God. 1. The duty of obedience to which we are called; 2. Without this all services, of whatever kind, are of no avail. Apply—(1) For our humiliation; (2) For our direction in future life.[e]

[a] "With returning prosperity and power, it was only natural that a question should arise as to the propriety of retaining those services of humiliation wh. had been instituted as memorials of the destruction of the city and temple."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] The tenth day of the fifth month was kept as the day on wh. the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians.

[c] "They did well to fast, but not to boast of their fasting and self-mortification."—*Wordsworth.* "These are heart-wrung tears. At these words, sympathetic tears swam o'er for the first time, from each celestial eye, as trees autumnal shed their leafy tears in golden showers, shaken by sudden gust; tears not to be forbid."—*Bailey.*

[d] *Lord Morpeth.*

[a] 2 Ki. xxv. 25; Je. xli. 1—3.

[b] Mat. vi. 16.

[c] Jos. xv. 21, 47

[d] Jos. xv. 33.

[e] *v.* 5. *Abp. Tillotson*, iii. 105; *R. Southgate*, ii. 316. *v.* 7. *Dr. G. Ric. Lords, Bamp. Lec.* 1; *Dr. G. Croft*, ii. 251. *C. Simeon, M.A.*

8—10. (8, 9) execute, *etc.*, expression of God's demand for *moral* not merely *ceremonial* goodness.[a] (10) oppress not, Je. v. 28. imagine evil, plot or plan evil schemes; it is wrong in God's sight to cherish evil schemes, as well as to execute them. We must avoid the very "appearance of evil," and "keep our hearts with all diligence."

Compassion and its reward—The cup of cold water.—A young Englishwoman was sent to France to be educated in a Huguenot school in Paris. A few evenings before the fatal massacre of St. Bartholomew's day, she and some of her young companions were taking a walk in some part of the town where there were sentinels placed—perhaps on the walls; and you know that when a soldier is on guard he must not leave his post until he is relieved, that is, till another soldier comes to take his place. One of the soldiers, as the young ladies passed him, besought them to have the charity to bring him a little water, adding that he was very ill, and that it would be as much as his life was worth to go and fetch it himself. The ladies walked on, much offended at the man for presuming to speak to them,—all but the young Englishwoman, whose compassion was moved, and who, leaving her party, procured some water and brought it to the soldier. He begged her to tell him her name and place of abode, and this she did. When she rejoined her companions, some blamed and others ridiculed her attention to a common soldier; but they soon had reason to lament that they had not been equally compassionate, for the grateful soldier contrived, on the night of the massacre, to save this young Englishwoman, while all the other inhabitants of the house she dwelt in were killed.[b]—*A soldier overcome by kindness.*—There was in a barrack an incorrigible soldier, who had been fined, imprisoned, flogged, and put on extra drill, but all to no purpose. His colonel, seeing him one day in the guard-house for some misdemeanour, said to him, "What! you here again?" "Yes, sir," he replied, with a dogged hardihood that showed he cared for no punishment. The colonel turned round to the sergeant and said, "I don't know what to do with this fellow. We've flogged him, fined him, imprisoned him, put him on extra drill; in fact, we've tried everything." "No, sir," answered the sergeant, touching his cap with the military salute, "There's one thing you have not tried, you've never forgiven him." The colonel held down his head, somewhat ashamed, and after consultation with his brother officers, returned to the soldier, and said to him, "There, sir, you may go; you're forgiven; you will not be punished for this." A new light seemed to break upon the mind of that man, and from that time, two years past, said the chaplain, there has not been a better behaved or more easily managed man in the regiment.

11—14. (11) pulled .. shoulder, as a stubborn beast wh. will not be yoked. (12) adamant stone, Eze. iii. 9, poss. *diamond.* (13) and I, a change of person to give greater force to the message. (14) desolate after them, or behind them, when they had gone into captivity.[a] pleasant land, Je. iii. 19. Lit. "land of desire."

Tastes in hearers.—One is like an Athenian, and he hearkeneth after news: if the preacher say anything of our armies beyond the sea, or council at home, or matters of court, that is his lure: another is like the Pharisee, and he watcheth if anything be

a Comp. Ex. xxii. 21; Is. i. 23, lviii. 6, 7; Mi. vi. 6—8.

r. 9. *L. Booker*, 134.

"Compassion is an emotion of which we ought never to be ashamed. Graceful, particularly in youth, is the tear of sympathy and the heart that melts at the tale of woe. We should not permit ease and indulgence to contract our affections and wrap us up in a selfish enjoyment; but we should accustom ourselves to think of the distresses of human life, of the solitary cottage, the dying parent, and the weeping orphan. Nor ought we ever to sport with pain and distress in any of our amusements, or treat even the meanest insect with wanton cruelty." — *Dr. Blair.*

b *Paxton Hood.*

a "It was ordered remarkably by God's providence that no occupants took possession of it, but that during the Jews' absence it was reserved for them against their return, after seventy years."—*Fausset.*

said that may be wrested to be spoken against persons in high place, that he may play the devil in accusing of his brethren; let him write that in his tables too: another smacks of eloquence, and he gapes for a phrase, that when he cometh to his ordinary, he may have one figure more to grace and worship his tale: another is malcontent, and he never pricketh up his ears till the preacher come to gird against some whom he spiteth. and when the sermon is done, he remembereth nothing which was said to him, but that which was spoken against another: another cometh to gaze about the church: he hath an evil eye, which is still looking upon that from which Job did avert his eye: another cometh to muse; so soon as he is set, he falleth into a brown study; sometimes his mind runs on his market, sometimes of his journey, sometimes of his suit, sometimes of his dinner, sometimes of his sport after dinner; and the sermon is done before the man thinks where he is: another cometh to hear, but so soon as the preacher hath said his prayer, he falls fast asleep, as though he had been brought in for a corpse, and the preacher should preach at his funeral.[b]

"They might thank themselves (for the desolations of their land); it was they that by their own wickedness laid the pleasant land desolate. It was not so much the Chaldæans that did it. No. they did it themselves. The desolations of a land are owing to the wickedness of its inhabitants."—*M. Henry.*

[b] *Henry Smith.*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—3. (1, 2) **jealous**, ch. i. 14, better, *zealous.* **fury**, here, in a good sense, warmth or zeal. "I glowed with love and zeal for Zion." (3) **city of truth**, or faithfulness, Is. i. 21. **mountain**,[a] with special reference to Moriah.

The restoration of the Jews (*vv.* 3—8).—I. Their interest in this prophecy. 1. It had respect to the Jews of that day; 2. And to the days that are yet future. II. The certainty of its accomplishment. notwithstanding all the difficulties which lie in the way. 1. When things are far beyond the powers of man we are apt to judge that they never can be effected: 2. But this is absurd. Apply:—(1) Let none indulge in unbelief in reference to their own souls; (2) Nor in reference to the Church of God.[b]

[a] Comp. Is. ii. 2; Mi. iv. 1; Eze. xl. 2.

[b] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

4—6. (4) **old men**, a sign of settled times, when men are not cut off in their prime by war or pestilence. (5) **streets**, *etc.*, the sign of peace and security.[a] (6) **marvellous . . eyes**, Lu. xviii. 27.

Juvenile sport (*v.* 5).—Prophecy of the future prosperity of Jerusalem. One sign of that prosperity is the number and employment of the children in the streets. Subject: juvenile recreation. Turn to the text. I. Who are those of whom the text speaks? Boys and girls. The greater part of the population, three out of every five, children. Boys and girls, not boys or girls alone, played together. Brothers and sisters. Would choose sports of common interest. Some would behave very differently from others. Lesson: Sunday-school children should be known everywhere by their good behaviour. Many of them: "streets full." II. What were they doing? "Playing." In China the men fly their kites, while the children look gravely on. Sport natural for children. Children at play a pleasant sight, when the play is harmless and pursued without strife. "Playing," not quarrelling. Time for all things.

"All work and no play
Makes Jack a dull boy."

[a] "This imagery, which represents a time when there is no alarm of war, or plague, or famine, but everything is peaceful and joyous, describes, in a spiritual sense, the condition of the Church, as defended by Christ, and enriched with blessings by Him."—*S. Jerome.*

"Now, roughly, not with vain subtilty of definition, but for plain use of the words, 'Play' is an exertion of body or mind made to please ourselves, and with no determined end; and work is a thing done because it ought to be done,

and with a determined end. You play, as you call it, at cricket, for instance. That is as hard work as anything else, but it amuses you, and it has no result but the amusement. If it were done as an ordered form of exercise, for health's sake, it would become work directly. So, in like manner, whatever we do to please ourselves, and only for the sake of the pleasure, not for an ultimate object, is 'Play'—the pleasing thing, not the useful thing. Play may be useful, in a secondary sense (nothing is indeed more useful or necessary); but the use of it depends on its being spontaneous."—*Ruskin.*
b Hive.

But you should also remember that

"All play and no work
Makes Jack a wicked Turk."

Neither Sunday, nor school hour, nor work hour, the time for play. "Playing," not at mischief, as defacing walls, throwing stones, injuring clothes, etc. III. Where were they? "Streets." No other place for them. Walled city. Densely peopled, narrow streets, no vehicles, no open squares or enclosed plots. With us, different. Squares, parks, fields, etc. Play in streets a nuisance. Policeman, "move on." Learn:—Be kind to each other. Avoid quarrelling. Play in right place, at right time. "How doth the little busy bee," etc.[b]

Playing together.—Yes, it is a happy sight, the sports of children! What life! what joy! what consequential airs! Bring out the baby, Bridget. Let the trumpet and the drum do their best; only let it be at a proper time, and in a proper place, and not to disturb the sick and nervous. We never know what children really are while we keep apart from them, or watch them as a sentinel does a prisoner. Let us get hold of your hands and your hearts, little ones, and we will try to enter into your joys.

"He who checks a child with terror,
Stops its play, and stills its song,
Not alone commits an error,
But a grievous moral wrong.

"Give it play, and never fear it,
Active life is no defect;
Never, never break its spirit,
Curb it only to direct."

7—12. (7) **east country**, *lit.* "land of the sun-rising." Or, "from the rising to the going down of the sun; *i.e.* from all parts of the world. (8) **in truth**, *etc.*, Ho. ii. 19, 20. (9) **be strong**, so that you do not weakly yield to any discouragements. **prophets**, esp. Haggai and Zechariah. **foundation**, *etc.*, see Eze. v. 1, 2. (10) **no hire**, Hag. i. 6, *i.e.* "the fruits of the earth would not pay the labour of those who cultured it, bec. the Divine judgments lay on a negligent people. **peace**, *etc.*, in the time of neglect.[a] (11) **residue**, those left, who take up My work with zeal. (12) **seed**, *etc.*, general signs of returning prosperity.

The west country (*v.* 7).—The margin has, instead of "west country," "country of the going down of the sun." The form in the margin is exceedingly common; thus people do not always say, We are to go to the east or west, but "to the side where is the going down," or "to the side where is the ascending place." "In what direction are you going?" "To the place of the going down."[b]

13—15. (13) **curse**, or byword and reproach.[a] (14) **thought**, or formed the purpose. **repented not**, found no occasion for changing My purpose. (15) **well**, or graciously; granting restoring mercies.

A curse changed to a blessing (*v.* 13).—I. Sinners are a curse. 1. Accursed of God; 2. A curse to themselves; 3. A curse to

a Eze. iv. 1, 4.
"The illustrious officer of day first worshipp'd in the east, 'gins to display the glory of his beams; then buds unfold their chary leaves, each dew-drown'd marigold insensibly doth stir itself and spread; each violet lifts up his pensive head."—*Poole.*
b Roberts.

a "A standing monument of the Divine vengeance, so that the heathen used this as a common form of imprecation, 'God do so to me as He did to the Jews.'"—*Lowth.*
Is. lxv. 15; Je. xxix. 32.
"Blasphemy pro-

others. II. Sinners may be saved. 1. By the promise of God; 2. Through the mediation of Christ; 3. By the condition of faith. III. And become a blessing. 1. To themselves; 2. To others.[b]—*The sinner a curse; the saint a blessing.*—For introduction see Mat. Henry's explanation. Another explanation may be this: By their declension in religion the Jews had become a curse to the heathen instead of a blessing—"blind leaders of the blind." Hence it is suggested—I. That ungodly persons are a curse in the world; *i.e.* in the measure of their sinfulness. Illustrate this by showing how the indolent, dishonest, intemperate, etc., tempt others—make their homes unhappy, are a curse to themselves. Show that any one may fall into evil habits and become a great injury to others. II. That godly persons are a blessing. By word, deed, and example others are encouraged to become like them. World improved. Good laws passed. Sabbath kept. Sin rebuked. Peace maintained, etc. III. That the ungodly are made godly by the salvation of God. God saves from sin and its consequences. Salvation through faith in Christ. Faith works by love. Obedience of faith and love. Learn:—If you are not saved you are among the ungodly, you will be either a curse or a blessing in the world! Which shall it be?[c]

16, 17. (16) **speak . . neighbour,** Eph. iv. 25. **in your gates,** the usual place of judgment,[a] and of concourse. But the term often stands for the city itself. Here it means, wheresoever you come into social relationships. (17) **imagine evil,** ch. vii. 10.

Kings as judges (*v.* 16).—It appears from the above, and other passages of Scripture, that the kings of Israel distributed justice, or sat in judgment to decide causes that might be brought before them, at the gate; that the gate of the city was the place where these causes came before them, and where they pronounced their decision; that the king held his councils at the gate, or where the elders or chiefs met the king, to consider the affairs of the nation; and that, in fact, all their principal assemblies were held at the gates of the city. This Jewish custom still exists high in the interior of South Africa. While in Kurreechane, a city about twelve or thirteen hundred miles up from the Cape of Good Hope, I was told that a cause was going to be brought before the king. Being anxious to witness it, I was led in haste to the gate, where I saw the king sit down at the right side of it, with his secretary on his right hand, and the prosecutor, or complainer, on his left, who stated his case across to the secretary. During his narrating his case, the king was looking about as if not attending to what was said, but I saw from his eye that he was attending to what, for form's sake, was addressed to the secretary. When the party had finished what he had to say, the secretary repeated the whole to the king, as if he had been entirely ignorant of the matter. The king immediately gave judgment.[b]—*Truth.*—Petrarch, a celebrated Italian poet, who flourished 400 years ago, recommended himself to the confidence and affection of Cardinal Colonna, in whose family he resided, by his candour and strict regard to truth. A violent quarrel having occurred in Cardinal Colonna's household, the cardinal, wishing to decide with justice, assembled all his people, and obliged them to bind themselves, by a solemn oath on the Gospels, to declare the whole truth. Every one, without exception, sub-

perly denotes calumny, detraction, reproachful or abusive language, against whomsoever it be vented. It is in Scripture applied to reproaches not aimed against God only, but man also. (Rom. iii. 8, xiv. 16; 1 Pet. iv. 4.) It is, however, more peculiarly restrained to evil or reproachful words offered to God."—*C. Buck. v.* 13. *W. Scoresby,* 68, 92.

b W. Whythe.

c Hive.

a "The administration of justice tends to promote peace and concord."—*Spk. Com.* "A Chinese, justly irritated at the oppressions of the Government, gained access to the emperor with his complaints. "I come," said he, "to present myself to the punishment to which similar remonstrances have brought six hundred of my fellow creatures; and I give you notice to prepare for new executions, since China possesses ten thousand patriots, who, for the same cause, will follow each other, to ask the same reward." The emperor was not proof against such intrepid virtue: he granted the Chinese the reward that pleased him best—the punishment of the guilty, and the suppression of the obnoxious impost.

b Campbell.

mitted to this determination: even the cardinal's brother, Bishop of Luna, was not excused. Petrarch, in his turn, presented himself to take the oath; the cardinal closed the book, and said, "As to you, Petrarch, your word is sufficient." [c]

18—21. (18, 19) **cheerful feasts**, *i.e.* they shall still be duly kept, but their character shall be changed; bec. they need be no longer memorials of the desolation of their city and temple, seeing that these had been rebuilt. (20) **people**, *i.e.* more of the exiles for Babylon. It seems that the fewness of the people then in Jerus. was a source of discouragement. (21) **let . . pray**, Is. ii. 3; Mi. iv. 1, 2. A prophecy also of the Gentiles flocking into the Gospel Church.

Nations meeting for prayer (*vv.* 20—22).—I. The object of this gathering of the nations. II. The universality of this gathering of the nations. III. The promptitude of their decision. IV. The personal character of this movement.

The heart and the habit.—It is not *in cortice*, but *in corde;* in the heart, not in the habit; in the conscience, not in the looks; it is in the breast, not on the brow; not suffering a man to be like some prisons—beautiful without, but full of horror, blackness, chains, and dungeons within! It is a peace, not residing in the hall of the senses, but in the closet of the heart. A saint's peace is a silent calmness; an unseen quietness; meat, of which those without know not; like the windows of Solomon's temple, narrow without, broad within; the worst, the unbeautiful, the black side of the cloud is seen when the bright is hidden. [a]

22, 23. (22) **many people**, Is. lxvi. 23. **ten men**, *i.e.* an indefinite number. **take hold**, the gesture of entreating friendly assistance. **skirt**, this with its fringe and blue riband was a distinguishing badge of the few. [a]

Joining the Church (*v.* 23).—I. The Church of Christ is a society distinct and separate from the world. II. The presence of God is the glory of the Church. III. It is binding upon all disciples of Jesus to unite themselves to His Church. IV. It is obligatory upon the Church to present an inviting aspect to the world.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—4. (1) **Hadrach**, or *Syria*. [a] **the rest**, *i.e.* the chief stay and support of the Syrian kingdom. **eyes**, *etc.*, some trans. "When the eyes of the Lord are upon man, as upon all the tribes of Israel." The expression is a very obscure and difficult one. [b] (2) **Hamath**, Nu. xxxiv. 8; Jos. xiii. 5. **wise**, Eze. xxviii. 3. [c] (3) **stronghold**, on an island half a mile from the shore, wh. seemed impregnable. **heaped up**, by her merchandise. (4) **cast her out**, many of her wealthy inhabitants fled over the Mediterranean. **power . . sea**, *i.e.* her sea defences. [d]

The thirst for gold.—In an Indian village there lived, in the old Spanish times, a padre, or missionary priest, a man of simple and retired habits, who laboured to convert and maintain the inhabitants in the Roman Catholic faith. He was beloved by the simple tribe among whom he was domesticated, and they

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c *Whitecross.* *v.* 19. *J. H. Newman*, 431. *vv.* 20—22. *Jon. Edwards*, ii. 278.

There is a fable of a princess who must make her escape from a castle, or starve. The gate is open: the bright sun invites her forth. Only a spider's web hangs across the passage. This she brushes aside, when, lo! another, and so on, till she sits down and weeps, feeling that, though there is only a spider's web between her and liberty, she cannot escape. Habit is like these spiders' webs. To meet each act is an herculean task, but grace can uproot and conquer it. *a Jenkyn.*

a Nu. xv. 38; De. xxii. 12.

v. 23. *T. Scott*, vi. 87; *B. Beddome*, v. 30; *T. Blackley*, ii. 1.

a Poss. a part of Syria, near Damascus.

b "Another rend. is, 'The eyes of men in general and of all Israel in particular, through consternation at the victorious progress of Alexander, shall be directed to Jehovah."—*Fausset.*

c Is. xlvii. 10.

did not fail to prove their good-will by frequent presents of such trifles as they found were agreeable to him. They say that he was a great writer, and occasionally received from the Indians of his parish a small quantity of finely-coloured dust, which he made use of to dry his sermons and letters. Knowing how much the padre loved writing, they seldom returned from the mountains without bringing him some. It happened that he had occasion to write to a friend of his living in the capital, who was a jeweller, and did not fail to use his pounce-box. In returning an answer, his knowing friend, to his great surprise, bantered him with his great riches, seeing that he dried the very ink on his paper with gold-dust. This opened the simple padre's eyes. He sent for his Indian friends, and, without divulging his newly-acquired knowledge, begged them to get him more of the fine bright sand. They, nothing doubting, did so. The demon of avarice began to whisper into the old man's ear, and warm the blood of his heart. He begged for more, and received it; and then more; till they had furnished him with several pounds weight. All entreaty that they would show him the locality where this bright dust was gathered was resisted with calmness and steadiness for a long time. Alternate cajoling and menace were employed with equally bad success. At length, wearied out, they told him that as they loved him, and saw he was disturbed in his mind, they would yield to his desire, and show him the spot, on the condition that he would submit to be led to and from the place blindfold. To this he greedily consented, and was in course of time taken upon their shoulders, and carried whither he knew not, by many devious ways, up and down mountain and barranca for many hours, into the recesses of the Cordillera, and there, in a cave through which a stream issued from the breast of the mountain, they set him down, and unbound his eyes. They there showed him quantities of the gold-dust, intermingled with large lumps of the pure ore, while their spokesman addressed him, saying, "Father, we have brought you here at your earnest request, because you so much desired it, and because we loved you; take now what you want to carry away with you, let it be as much as you can carry, for here you must never hope to come again; you will never persuade us more." The padre seemingly acquiesced, and after disposing as much of the precious metal about his person as he could contrive to carry, he submitted to be blindfolded, and was again taken in the arms of the Indians to be transported home. The tradition goes on to relate how the curé, upon whom the cursed lust of gold had now seized, thought to outwit his conductors by untying his rosary and occasionally dropping a bead on the earth. If he flattered himself that any hope existed of his thus being able to thread the blind maze through which he passed, and find the locality, one may imagine his chagrin, when, once more arrived and set down at his own door, the first sight which met his uncovered eyes was the contented face of one of his Indian guides, and an outstretched hand, containing in its hollow the greater part of the grains of his rosary, while the guileless tongue of the finder expressed his simple joy at having been enabled to restore such a sacred treasure to the discomfited padre. Entreaties and threats were now employed in vain. Gentle as the Indians were, they were not to be bended. Government was apprised of the

d Comp. Ezr. xxviii. 18; Je. xlvii. 4; Am. i. 5—7.

"When I look at our immense resources, and consider the spirit of our people, I feel that all the splendid dreams of our poets will fall short of the glorious reality. There are fortunes to be made in this country yet in comparision with which those at the present day will fall into insignificance. The time will come when the possession of a million dollars will not be considered enough to entitle a man to take rank among the rich of our land. This prospect is a source of pleasure to me, and I say, in view of it, 'Get money at any price short of the sacrifice of your manhood and personal honour.' People who take ground against riches are generally without any themselves. It is true that wealth may be a power for evil in the land, but there is nothing in the nature of things that necessitates that."—*Beecher.*

The danger of wealth and elevation may, with propriety, be used as a motive to contentment in a humble state. It is said of Pope Pius V. that when dying he cried out despairingly, "When I was in a low condition I had some hopes of salvation; when I was

advanced to be a cardinal I greatly doubted it; but since I came to the popedom, I have no hope at all!"

e Latrobe.

circumstances, and commissioners were sent down to examine into the affair. The principal inhabitants were seized; and, menace being powerless, torture, the last argument of the tyrant, was resorted to. All in vain. Not a word could be wrung from them. Many were put to death; still their brethren remained mute, and the village became deserted, under the systematic persecution of the oppressers. The most careful researches, repeatedly made, from time to time, by adventurers in search of the rich deposit, have all resulted in disappointment; and to this day all that is known is, that somewhere in the recesses of the mountains lies the gold mine of La Navidad.[e]

5—8. (5) **Ashkelon**, *etc.*, cities of the Philistine plain and shore, allied in race to the Tyrians. **very sorrowful**, better, "Trouble greatly." (6) **bastard**, or mongrel; one whose birth has some blemish in it. (7) **blood . . abominations**, the foul and idolatrous sacrifices of Phil. idolatry. **remaineth**, left after the Div. judgment, was to be absorbed in the kingdom of Israel. **as . . Judah**, *i.e.* he shall be able to hold office in Judah, if fitted for it. **Ekron**, better, an Ekronite shall have equal rights with a Jebusite, or inhabitant of Jerusalem. (8) **encamp**, for their defence.[a]

Ekron, a Jebusite (*v.* 7).—I. The privilege here referred to. The Jebusites were inhabitants of Jerusalem. 1. The city has a glorious king; 2. Glorious privileges; 3. Laws; 4. Riches; 5. Happiness; 6. Servants; 7. Weapons. II. The manner in which God grants these privileges. 1. To a place; 2. To persons. III. The promise respects the future bestowment of privileges.[b]

[a] "Reassuring the Jews while engaged in the rebuilding, who might otherwise have feared that their work would be undone by the conqueror." —*Maurer.*

[b] *J. Sherman*

9. **rejoice**, *etc.*, Is. lxii. 11; Mat. xxi. 5; Jno. xii. 15. The joy is to be on account of the coming of Messiah. **shout**, Zep. iii. 14. **King**, *i.e.* Messiah. **riding . . ass**, contrasted with the usual richly caparisoned horse of a king.[a]

Jerusalem and her king (*vv.* 9, 10).—I. Jerusalem's joy. II. Jerusalem's king. III. Jerusalem's glory.[b]

Humility.—Pray much for the spirit of humility, the spirit of Christ, for that is it; otherwise, all thy vileness will not humble thee. When men hear of this or of other graces, and how reasonable they are, they think presently to have them, and do not consider the natural enmity and rebellion of their own hearts, and the necessity of receiving them from heaven. And therefore, in the use of all other means, be most dependent on that influence, and most in the use of that means which opens the heart most to that influence, and draws it down upon the heart; and that is, prayer. That spirit of Christ, which is all sweetness and love, so calms and composes the heart, that peace with God, and that unspeakably blessed correspondence of love with Him, do so fill the soul with lovingness and sweetness, that it can breathe nothing else. It hates nothing but sin, it pities the sinner, and carries towards the worst the love of goodwill, desiring their return and salvation. But as for those in whom appears the image of their Father, their heart cleaves to them as brethren indeed. No natural advantages of birth, of beauty, or of wit, draw a Christian's love so much as the resemblance of Christ; wherever that is found, it is comely and lovely to a soul that loves Him.[c]

[a] "This prophecy does not produce on the mind of an Oriental that idea of abject poverty and humility wh. would be suggested to an Occidental. Had He come riding in a chariot, it would have been an emblem of earthly grandeur; had He rode upon a horse, He would have seemed a conqueror; His riding upon an ass only showed that He was gentle, and that the weapons of His warfare were persuasion and the diffusion of truth." — *Van Lennep.*

[b] *Dr. Bonar.*

[c] *Leighton.*

10, 11. (10) **cut off**, destroy all war weapons, bec. Messiah

brings the reign of peace. **sea to sea**, Ps. lxxii. 8. (11) **thee**, the daughter of Zion, in *v.* 9. **blood . . covenant**, or in fulfilment of the covenant that was ratified with blood.[a] **prisoners**, *etc.*, Is. lxi. 1. Lit. *fettered ones.* **pit**, or prison.[b]

Rejoicings of peace.—

Brave minds, howe'er at war, are secret friends,
Their generous discord with the battle ends;
In peace they wonder whence dissension rose,
And ask how souls so like could e'er be foes.
Methinks I hear more friendly shouts rebound,
And social clarions mix their sprightly sound;
The British flags are furl'd, her troops disband,
As scatter'd armies seek their native land.
The hardy veteran, proud of many a scar,
The manly charms, and honours of the war,
Who hoped to share his friend's illustrious doom,
And in a battle find a soldier's tomb,
Leans on his spear to take his farewell view,
And, sighing, bids the glorious camp adieu.[c]

12—14. (12) **stronghold**, wh. God offers to be to you. **render double**, Is. xl. 2. (13) **bent Judah**, as a bow: using these as Divine instruments. **O Greece**, rather, *O Javan.*[a] Reference may be to the valiant efforts of the Maccabees to free the country from the Syrian oppressions. (14) **Lord**, present to give His special aid and defence.

Prisoners of hope (*v.* 12).—I. The persons to whom this counsel or command is addressed, sinners in their natural condition, the great mass of mankind. 1. They are prisoners; 2. Of hope. II. The counsel addressed to them. 1. A stronghold is pointed out; 2. They are directed to Christ as their stronghold. Apply:—(1) See an evidence of the truth of the Gospel; (2) See the duty of disseminating the Gospel.[b]

15—17. (15) **subdue . . stones**, better, "trample on the stones slung against them."[a] **make a noise**, the joyous noise of feasting after victory. **filled**, with blood; "to be wet with blood is an image of victory."[b] **like bowls**, *i.e.* the bowls of the altar, in wh. the blood of the sacrifices was received. (16) **stones of a crown**, contrasted with the worthless slingstones, *v.* 15. **ensign**, or signal, to call all people to Jehovah's land. (17) **goodness**, or prosperity. **corn**, *etc.*, signs of plenty.[c]

Delights of peace.—

Fair peace! how lovely, how delightful thou!
By whose wide tie the kindred sons of men
Like brothers live, in amity combined,
And unsuspicious faith; while honest toil
Gives every joy, and to those joys a right,
Which idle, barbarous rapine but usurps.
Beneath by calm-inspiring influence,
Science his views enlarges, Art refines,
And swelling Commerce opens all her ports.
Bless'd be the man divine who gives us thee![d]

a Ex. xxiv. 8; He. ix. 18—20.

b "An image of the misery of the Jewish exiles in Egypt, Greece etc., under the successors of Alexander."—*Fausset.*

"Would you taste the tranquil scene? Be sure your bosoms be serene: devoid of hate, devoid of strife, devoid of all that poisons life; and much it 'vails you, in their place, to graft the love of human race."—*Shenstone.*

c *Tickell.*

a Is. lxvi. 19.

v. 12. *Bp. Hopkins*, 259; *Dr. Doddridge*, ii. 145; *J. Morton*, ii. 155; *R. Walker*, 213; *S. Lavington*, i. 222; *B. Beddome*, iii. 86; *C. Davy*, iv. 34; *F. Elwin*, i. 1; *J. Summerfield*, 325; *J. C. M. Bellew*, i. 311.

b *Dr Bonar.*

a Comp. Job xli. 28.

b Is. lxiii. 1—3.

c "The spiritual blessings of the Gospel, esp. in God's Holy Word and sacraments, are the corn and new wine which strengthen and refresh chaste and holy souls, who are here compared to men and maidens."—*S. Cyril.*

d *Thomson.*

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1—4. (1) latter rain, this was early spring, March or April. It came in time to ripen the corn. bright clouds, better, *lightnings*.[a] Great rains are usually associated with thunder and lightning.[b] grass, a general term for cultured vegetation. (2) idols, fr. whom such blessings had been vainly sought in the degenerate days.[c] diviners, De. xviii. 10—14. went their way, or *migrate*, wander, as untended sheep. (3) shepherds, fig. for the princes and leaders. goats,[d] better rend. "the chief ones." goodly horse, *comp.* Song Sol. i. 9. Courageous and beautiful as a charger. (4) out of him, *i.e.* Judah. corner, or corner-stone, Messiah. nail, or peg, by wh. the shepherd's tent is fastened. battle . . bow, ch. ix. 13.

Eastern dreamers.—The Hindoos may be called a nation of dreamers; they are often elevated or depressed by the gay or sorrowful scenes of their sleeping hours. The morning is the time for the young and the old to tell their wondrous stories, and many a sage prognostication is then delivered to the attentive hearers. Men and women often take long journeys, perform arduous penances, and go through expensive ceremonies, from no other cause than that of a dream. The crafty Brahmin finds this to be a powerful medium of access to the superstition and purses of the people. How many splendid temples have been built or repaired, how many rest-houses erected, how many costly presents have been made, as the results of a real or pretended dream! Mendicants, pandarams, priests, and devotees have all had their profitable revelations from the gods. Does a needy impostor wish to have a good berth and a settled place of abode? He buries an idol in some lonely place, and, at the expiration of about twelve months, he has a dream, and a vision into the bargain, for the god actually appears to him when he is not asleep, and says, "Go to such a place, and you will find my image; there long, long has it been in disgrace, but now you must build a temple to my glory." The knave affects to be greatly excited, and relates the whole as a profound secret to a few of his select friends. The story soon gets abroad, and numbers of people beg of him to go to the sacred place in search of the deity. At last he consents, but expresses many a fear as they proceed that he has been deceived, or that his or their unbelief will hinder him from finding out the place. In approaching the scene of operation he hesitates, thinks he cannot be far off, intimating that "the country had just such an appearance in his dream." He then says "Dig," and numbers of the people set to work in good earnest. After some time he shakes his head, repeats his incantations, and says, "It is not here." He then points to the real spot, and again his gulled attendants commence their meritorious operations. At last the god is found, and the multitude make the welkin ring with their shouts of joy. They fall before the grave impostor and worship at his feet. His object is gained, money and materials come in on every hand, and shortly after a temple and its goodly courts arise, in which he dwells for life.[e]

[a] Job xxviii. 25.

[b] Je. x. 13.

[c] Je. x. 8; Ha. ii. 18.

The idols here referred to are properly *teraphim*, or household gods. Ge. xxxi. 19.

[d] "The term *he goats* describes what these rulers *were*, the emblem of heads strong wantonness and offensive lust."—*Fausset.*

v. 1. *H. Melvill*, i. 284.

v. 2. *P. Goodwin*, 28; *Bp. Wordsworth*, 336.

v. 4. *W. Strong*, 389; *A. Fuller*, 517.

"Then with uplifted hands, and eyes devout, grateful to heaven, over his head beholds a dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow conspicuous, with three listed colours gay, betokening peace from God, and covenant new."—*Milton.*

"For, faithful to its sacred page, heaven still rebuilds thy span; nor lets the type grow pale with age that first spoke peace to man."—*Campbell.*

[e] *Roberts.*

5—7. (5) they, *etc.*, God's people, when God manifests His power in them, and through them. mire . . streets, the house refuse is freely swept into the narrow streets of Eastern cities. riders, *etc.*, with prob. refer. to the discomfiture of Antiochus's army. (6) house of Joseph, survivors of the ten tribes.[a] (7) rejoice . . wine, ch. ix. 15.

Superstition as to dreams.—For the most part dreams are nothing else but the incoherent and disjointed images of those things we have received into the fancy by the senses, and treasured up in our memories when we were awake ; and we may as reasonably hope to find exact and curious pictures drawn in the clouds, as any truth and certainty in these dreams. And yet such is our folly and superstition, that we will be continually spelling the counsels of the Almighty in these antic and insignificant characters ; and fancy the product of our distempered imaginations to be the dictates of the Holy Spirit and the oracles of God. . . . How this piece of enthusiasm came to obtain so universally is no difficult matter to determine ; for in the first ages of the world God made use of this way to reveal Himself to mankind ; and then the devil, who loves to ape God in his worship, took up this method of giving his oracles, and instituted this custom as a sacred rite ; that men should sleep in the temples of his idols when they came to inquire anything of them ; and answers were given to them in dreams and night visions. And therefore we may justly conclude that the nice and curious observation of dreams is not only unreasonable and superstitious, but heathenish also.[b]

8—10. (8) hiss for them, fig. fr. attraction of bees into a hive.[a] increase, Is. xlix. 19. (9) sow them, best referred, as a promise, to the times of the Christian Church, when the Jews should be Gospel seed, sown among all nations. remember me, hold fast allegiance to Me. live, "the spiritual life of the people of God."[b] (10) Assyria, *etc.*, comp. 2 Ki. xv. 29 ; Is. xi. 11—16 : Ho. xi. 11. place, better, *it*, i.e. the land of Gilead and Lebanon.

Redemption explained.—"In whom we have redemption." This explains the particular nature of the deliverance from the kingdom of darkness before spoken of. It was not a mere rescue, as a slave liberated by the compassion of his master ; nor as of a debtor set free at his earnest entreaties by his creditor and lord, as in the parable of the ten thousand talents ; nor was it accomplished by the exertion of force only, as Abraham delivered Lot, and David his followers from the Amalekites at Ziklag. But this deliverance from Satan's dominion is a redemption, something purchased back, a rescue by a ransom price paid down. It implies a valuable consideration, as it were, first given ; a full discharge of all that was due to the law, righteousness, and truth of God, by a substitute or surety, "a daysman coming between" the offended Majesty of heaven and us, and making a perfect satisfaction to Divine Justice on our behalf. "Christ" hath in this manner, and no other, "redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."[c]

11, 12. (11) he, *i.e.* the returned nation ; Israel. Imagery taken from the first deliverance through the Red Sea. smite, *i.e.* God shall smite the sea for them. river, or sea. Ref. is still

a "They who were severed by Jeroboam's schism, will dwell together in Christ; and there will be one flock and One Shepherd."—*S. Jerome.*

Eze. xxxvii. 19—22.

"As one who in some frightful dream would shun his pressing foe, labours in vain to run, and his own slowness in his sleep bemoans, in thick short sighs, weak cries, and tender groans."-*Dryden.*

b Atterbury.

a "As bees are gathered by hissing, or whistling, into a swarm and into a hive."—*Wordsworth.*

Is. v. 26, vii. 18. "Summon them fr. distant countries, by a certain signal, as a shepherd calls his flock together with his whistle."—*Lowth.*

b Spk. Com.

"The slight hold the Jews have on every soil where they now live, as also the commercial, and therefore cosmopolitan character of their pursuits, making a change of residence easy to them, fit them peculiarly for missionary work."—*Moore.*

c Bp. D. Wilson.

a "This is equivalent to an assurance that all obstacles will be surmounted that now restrain the Jews in spiritual bondage, and that they will be delivered by a

glorious exodus from their present spiritual Egypt of darkness and thraldom into the glorious light and liberty of the Gospel in the Church of Christ."—*Wordsworth.*
b C. Simeon, M.A.

to the Red Sea.[a] (12) **walk**, *comp.* the N. T. word, "conversation." Col. iii. 17.

Christ the strength of His people (*v.* 12).—I. The state to which the Jews shall, in due season, be restored. 1. They will be restored to God; 2. Their restoration will be spiritual. II. The state which it is our privilege to enjoy at this day. 1. Invincible strength; 2. Assured confidence. Apply:—(1) Contemplate this state in reference to the Jews; (2) Seek to enjoy it in your own souls.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1, 2. (1) **doors**, *i.e.* passes, or mountain defiles. **fire**, typical of invading enemies. Poss. this is prophetic of the Rom. invasion under Vespasian and Titus. Some think Lebanon here represents the *temple.*[a] (2) **fir tree**, a smaller tree of the same kind as the cedar. **Bashan**, joined with Lebanon in Is. ii. 13. **mighty**, or the principal ones, fig. by the cedars. **forest . . down**, better, "the forest that is fenced like a fortress." The inaccessible forest.

Fallen greatness (*v.* 2).—I. The differences there are among men, physical, social, moral, intellectual, religious, spiritual. II. Their fall, however, distinguished. 1. There is a moral fall to which all are exposed; 2. There is a mortal fall which to all is inevitable. III. The sorrow caused by their removal. 1. Sympathetic; 2. Rational; 3. Moral and pious; the death of a good man is a public loss; such is a benefactor, an intercessor, etc.[b]

Cedars of Lebanon (*v.* 1).—The mountainous range of Lebanon was celebrated for the extent of its forests, and particularly for the size and excellence of its cedars. The ascent from the village of Eden, or Aden, near Tripoli, to the spot where the cedars grow, is inconsiderable. This distance is computed by Captains Irby and Mangles to be about five miles, allowing for the windings of the road, which is very rugged, and passes over hill and dale. These far-famed trees are situated on a small eminence in a valley at the foot of the highest part of the mountain: the land on the mountain's side has a sterile aspect, and the trees are remarkable by being altogether in one clump. By the natives they are called Arsileban. There are, in fact, two generations of trees; the oldest are large and massy, four, five, or even seven trunks springing from one base; they rear their heads to an enormous height, spreading their branches afar; and they are not found in any other part of Lebanon, though young trees are occasionally met with. The ancient cedars—those which superstition has consecrated as holy, and which are the chief object of the traveller's curiosity—have been gradually diminishing in number for the last three centuries. In 1550, Belloni found them to be twenty-eight in number; Rauwolf, in 1575, counted twenty-four; Dandini, in 1600, and Thevenot, about fifty years after, enumerated twenty-three, which Maundrell, in 1697, states were reduced to sixteen. Dr. Pococke, in 1738, found fifteen standing, and one which had been recently blown down. Burckhardt, in 1810, counted eleven or twelve; twenty-five others were

[a] "Seven years before the destruction of the temple and city, the great bronzed E. gate of the temple, which required twenty men to shut it, flew open of its own accord in the sixth hour of the night, at the passover."—*Josephus.*

v. 2. *W. Jay*, vii. 399.
b W. Jay, Funeral Sermon for Rowland Hill.
c Horne.
"The groves were God's first temples. Ere man learn'd to hew the shaft, and lay the architrave, and spread the roof above them: ere he framed the lofty vault, to gather and roll back the sound of anthems; in the darkling wood, amid the cool and silence, he knelt down and offer'd to the Mightiest solemn thanks and supplication. For his simple heart might not resist the sacred influences which, from the stilly twilight of the place, and from the grey old trunks, that high in heaven mingled their mossy boughs, and from

very large ones, about fifty of middling size, and more than three hundred smaller and young ones. Lastly, in 1818, Dr. Richardson found that the old cedars, "the glory of Lebanon," were no more than seven in number. In the course of another century, it is probable that not a vestige of them will remain, and the predictions of the Prophets will then be most literally fulfilled: "Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down. The high ones of stature shall be hewn down: Lebanon shall fall mightily" (Isa. xxxiii. 9, x. 33, 34). "Upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen: to the end that none of all the trees by the water exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up the top among the thick boughs" (Ezek. xxxi. 12, 14). "Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may destroy thy cedars. The cedar is fallen; the forest of the vintage is come down." The trunks of the old trees are covered with the names of travellers and other persons who have visited them, some of which go as far back as 1640. These trunks are described by Burckhardt as seeming to be quite dead; their wood is of a grey tint. Maundrell, in 1697, measured one, which he found to be twelve yards and six inches in girth, and thirty-seven yards in the spread of its boughs: at above five or six yards from the ground it was divided into five limbs, each of which was equal to a great tree. Forty-one years afterwards (viz. 1738), Dr. Pococke measured one which had the roundest body, though not the largest, and found it twenty-four feet in circumference; another, with a sort of triple body and of a triangular figure, measured twelve feet on each side. In 1818 Dr. Richardson measured one which he afterwards discovered was not the largest in the clump, and found it to be thirty-two feet in circumference. Finally, in 1824, Mr. Madox rested under the branches of a cedar which measured twenty-seven feet in circumference a little way from the ground: after which he measured the largest of the trees now standing, which he found to be thirty-nine or forty feet in circumference: it has three very large stems, and seven large branches, with various smaller ones. The cedars of Lebanon are frequently mentioned in the sacred writings. Besides their uncommon size and beauty of shape and foliage (which must be borne in mind in order to enter fully into the meaning of the sacred writers), they send forth a fragrant odour, which seems to be intended by "the smell of Lebanon" (Hos. xiv. 6: Sol. Song iv. 11). Its timber was used in the erection of the first and second temple at Jerusalem, as well as of the palace of Solomon; and in the last-mentioned edifice, so much cedar-wood appears to have been used, that it was called "the house of the forest of Lebanon" (1 Kings vii. 2, x. 19). The Tyrians used it in shipbuilding (Ezek. xxvii. 5, 6).

3—6. (3) shepherds, who keep their flocks on the slopes of Lebanon. glory, *i.e.* their flocks are seized by the invader. young lions, just in the very fulness of their strength. pride of Jordan, the thick woods on the banks, in wh. the lions found covert. These were ruthlessly cut down by the invader. (4) flock . . slaughter, *i.e.* destined for the slaughter. (5) slay them, instead of tending them.[a] (6) no more pity, "show no more pity for the main body of the people than their rulers do."[b] king, prob. Vespasian or Titus.

Worldly joy.—Carnal joy is a flash and away; leaves the

the sound of the invisible breath, that sway'd at once all their green tops, stole over him, and bow'd his spirit with the thought of boundless power and inaccessible majesty. Ah, why should we, in the world's riper years, neglect God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore only among the crowd, and under roofs that our frail hands have raised?"—*Bryant.*

"And there is another beauty produced by a number of differently formed trees standing on the same lawn, and each showing its separate mould and features. For as one star differeth from another in glory, and as one saint in heaven differeth from another in glory, so one tree differeth from another in glory. There is one glory of the oak, which looks as if it had faced a hundred storms, and, having stood them all, were ready to face as many more; another glory of the sycamore, that 'spreads in gentle pomp its honeyed shade.'"—*Dr. McCosh.*

a Am. ii. 6, 7, viii. 4—6.

b "Jehovah, in vengeance for their rejection of Messiah, gave them over to intestine feuds and Rom. rule. The Zealots and other factions Jews expelled and slew

one another by turns at the last invasion by Rome."—*Fausset.*

"Now, by my soul, and by these hoary hairs, I'm so o'erwhelm'd with pleasure, that I feel a latter spring within my wither'd limbs, that shoots me out again."—*Dryden.*

c Bolton.

a "Possibly representing the civil power, the priesthood, and prophecy. These have been removed from the Jews since their rejection of Messiah." — *Wordsworth.*

Some think a more definite reference to John, Simon, and Eleazar, three leaders of factions in the Jewish war.

v. 7. *Bp. Lake*, 249; *Bp. Reynolds*, v. 388, 409.

Cancel, to blot out, is merely "to make lattice-work;" *i.e.* making a cross over the part to be omitted—*cancello*, to make trellis.

b Paxton.

a "Thus the covenant which I had made with the whole nation of the Jews was broken, and I excluded them from having any benefit in the second covenant, that of the Gospel."—*Lowth.* *b* Ex. xxi. 32; Ho. iii. 2; Mat. xxvii. 9.

mind in more extreme and deeper darkness; blasts the heart and affections with all spiritual deadness and desolations, with many boiling distempers, much raging wildfire, and unquenchable thirst after sensuality and earthliness; and, first or last, it is ever certainly followed with rending of the spirit, spiritual terrors, thunders, darkness, and damnation. But godly joy is like the light of the sun, which, though it may for a time be overcast with clouds of temptations, mists of troubles, persecutions, and darkness of melancholy, yet it ordinarily breaks out again with more sweetness and splendour when the storm is over; but howsoever, it hath ever the Sun of Righteousness and fountain of all comfort so resident and rooted in the heart, that not all the darkness and gates of hell shall ever be able to displant or distain it, no more than a mortal man can pull the sun out of his sphere, or put out his glorious eye.[c]

7—9. (7) **poor**, in sense of *humble*. **staves**, or shepherds' rods. **beauty**, or God's favour towards His people. **bands**, implying bond of brotherhood bet. Israel and Judah. **fed**, or ruled, with the double shepherd's rods. (8) **three shepherds**, or kings.[a] **lothed them**, was straitened in affection for them. (9) **dieth**, *etc.*, Je. xv. 2.

Cancelling contracts (*v.* 7).—Written obligations were cancelled in different ways; one was by blotting or drawing a line across them, and another by striking them through with a nail; in both cases the bond was rendered useless, and ceased to be valid. These customs the Apostle applies to the death of Christ in his Epistle to the Colossians: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." A rod was sometimes broken, as a sign that the covenant into which they had entered was nullified. A trace of this ancient custom is still discernible in our own country: the Lord Steward of England, when he resigns his commission, breaks his wand of office, to denote the termination of his power. Agreeably to this practice, the Prophet Zechariah broke the staves of Beauty and Bands, the symbols of God's covenant with ancient Israel, to show them that, in consequence of their numerous and long-continued iniquities, he withdrew His distinguishing favour, and no longer acknowledged them as His peculiar people. This is the exposition given by the Prophet himself: "And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people; and it was broken in that day. Then I cut asunder my other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel."[b]

10—12. (10) **break my covenant**,[a] declare it to be no longer binding on Me. (11) **that day**, the day of Jerusalem's destruction. (12) **my price**, the speaker is Messiah. The value you set on all My love and care. **thirty pieces**, the value of a slave.[b]

The contempt poured on Christ (*vv.* 12, 13).—I. Regard these words as a prophetic intimation. 1. How exactly it was accomplished; 2. From this accomplishment we derive most important instruction. II. As an emblematic act. 1. What have we done to obtain an interest in Christ? 2. What have we been willing to suffer for Him? 3. What efforts have we made for promoting

His glory in the world? Apply—(1) To those who are indifferent about Christ; (2) Those who desire to obtain an interest in Him; (3) Those who profess that they do already possess this inestimable treasure.[c]

13, 14. (13) potter, Mat. xxvii. 9.[a] goodly price, ironical. (14) break the brotherhood, intimating the factious discords wh. would make unrestrained riot in the doomed city.

Agony of Christ.—Is it possible for us to understand that expression which dropped from His lips on that memorable night of His agony—"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"? Not only sorrowful, but exceeding sorrowful; so exceeding sorrowful that it approached the state of death. It was not possible for His eyes to give full relief to His pent-up sorrow in tears, or His lips in wailing lamentation; but the pores of His body came to His help. These, infinite in number, became so many outlets to the profound anguish of His smitten soul. What was it that occasioned this exceeding sorrowfulness of His soul in the agony of the garden? If we bear in mind that on Him were laid the iniquities of us all—that He knew each and all the sins of which the world was and would be guilty—that His pure and Divine nature was so susceptible of abhorrence of sin—that He was despised of the world for whom He was so benevolently suffering—that there were yet, not far away, the scenes of His trial, Peter's unfaithfulness, Judas's treachery, the cowardice of all the Apostles, and the tragic doings of Calvary—that the Father who had delighted in Him from eternity, who smiled on angels, and whose countenance of love gave radiancy to creation, was soon to lay His hand upon Him in chastisement and affliction, which would have annihilated the whole universe of finite life; when we consider these things, do we not perceive the reasons why His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?

15—17. (15) foolish shepherd, or unprofitable one. *Folly* is in Scrip. often a synonym for *wickedness.* (16) visit, *etc.*, just the things wh. the good shepherd and ruler ought to do. eat . . fat, enriching and satisfying himself, and heedless of the people's needs and sufferings.[a] Reference is to the Antichrist of the N. T. tear . . claws, or, "wear away their hoofs, by merciless driving over rough roads." (17) sword, better *drought.*[b]

Ministers should avoid levity.—

He that negotiates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin when you should woo a soul;
To break a jest when pity would inspire
Pathetic exhortation; and to address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales
When sent with God's commission to the heart.[c]

Minister, his legacy.—Lying on his death-bed, he bequeaths to each of his parishioners his precepts and example for a legacy. And they in requital erect every one a monument for him in their hearts. He is so far from that base jealousy that his memory should be outshined by a brighter successor, and from that wicked desire that his people may find his worth by the

v. 12. *Dr. Doddridge*, iii. 226.

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

a "Thrown to the potter with disdain. 'Let him take it to buy clay with, or for any use that a little money will serve to, for it is not worth hoarding; it may be enough for a potter's stock, but not for the pay of such a shepherd, much less for his purchase.'" — *Mat. Henry.*
"It seems too costly for Him who is the Prince of life and glory to let His fair limbs be tortured in agony; that the hands which carried mercies should be pierced with accursed nails; that the temples that were always clothed with love should have cruel thorns driven through them! It appears too much. Oh! weep, Christian, and let our sorrow rise. Is not the price all but too great, that your Beloved should for you resign *Himself?*"—*Spurgeon.*

b *John Bate.*

a Eze. xxxiv. 3.

b "Drought is an infliction more terrible to the shepherd than the sword, and therefore more suitable to the metaphor here. It implies the drying up of the arm, which is an emblem of strength, and of the right eye."—*Spk. Com.*

c *Cowper.*

"As he has abused his power and his understanding, signified by his arm

and his right eye. God shall in His just judgment deprive him of the use of both these faculties."—*Lowth.*

d Fuller.

v. 17. *Dr. R. Clerke*, 249; *Bp. Maltby*, i. 125.

"I venerate the man whose heart is warm, whose hands are pure, whose doctrines, and whose life coincident, exhibit lucid proof that he is honest in the sacred cause."—*Cowper.*

e Dryden.

a Comp. Is. li. 17, 22; Je. xiii. 13.

v. 1. *T. Dorrington*, i. 1.

"What profusion is there in His work! When trees blossom there is, not a single breastpin, but a whole bosom-full of gems; and of leaves they have so many suits that they can throw them away to the winds all summer long. What unnumbered cathedrals has He reared in the forest shades, vast and grand, full of curious carvings, and haunted evermore by tremulous music; and in the heavens above, how do stars seem to have flown out of His hand faster than sparks out of a mighty forge!"—*H. W. Beecher.*

b Legh Richmond.

a Eze. xxxviii. 3, 4.

"It is said that an unhelped cross is the heaviest thing a worthlessness of him that succeeds, that he doth heartily pray to God to provide them a better pastor after his decease. As for outward estate, he commonly lives in too bare pasture to die fat. It is well if he hath gathered any flesh, being more in blessing than bulk.[d]

Consistent pastor.—

The proud he tam'd, the penitent he cheer'd,
Nor to rebuke the rich offender fear'd;
His preaching much, but more his practice wrought,
A living sermon of the truths he taught.[e]

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

1, 2. (1) **stretched**, *etc.*, Is. xlii. 5, etc. (2) **cup of trembling**, causing those who drink it to tremble, or totter.[a] **Judah**, or the cities of Judah along with Jerusalem. The whole invasion would prove a terrible affair for the invaders.

Enjoyment of creation.—There is a peculiar sweetness in the recollection of those hours which we have spent with friends of a kindred spirit, amidst the beauties of created nature. The Christian can alone find that congeniality in associates, who not only possess a lively and cultivated sense of the high beauty which landscape scenery presents to the eye, but who can also see creation's God in every feature of the prospect. The painter can imitate, the poet describe, and the tourist talk with ecstasy of the sublime and beautiful objects which constitute the scene before him; but he only can be said to enjoy them aright whose talents, tastes, and affections are consecrated to the glory of Him by whom all things were made, and without whom "was not anything made that was made." When the pencil that traces the rich and animated landscape of mountains, lakes, and trees is guided by a grateful heart, as well as by a skilful hand, then the picture becomes no less an acceptable offering to God than it is a source of well-directed pleasure to the mind of man. And when the poet, in harmonious numbers, makes hill and dale responsive to his song, happy is it if his heart be in unison with the harp of David, and if he can call on all created nature to join in one universal chorus of gratitude and praise. The Christian traveller best enjoys scenes like these. In every wonder, he sees the hand that made it; in every landscape, the bounty that adorns it; in rivers, fields, and forests, the Providence that ministers to the wants of man; in every surrounding object he sees an emblem of his own spiritual condition;—himself a stranger and a pilgrim, journeying on through a country of wonders and beauties: alternately investigating, admiring, and praising the works of his Maker; and anticipating a holy and happy eternity, to be spent in the paradise of God, where the prospects are ever new, and the landscapes never fade from the sight.[b]

3—5. (3) **burdensome stone**, one difficult and dangerous to lift or to carry. A stone that might break down the strength of him who lifted it, and crush him beneath it. **cut in pieces**, or crushed to pieces. (4) **that day**, of Divine deliverance.[a] The day referred to cannot with certainty be decided. Different

days seem referred to in this prophecy. **open . . upon**, in kindly regard. (5) **governors of Judah**, the tribe leaders would join with Jerusalem in resisting the invader. Refer. may be to circums. of the Maccab. period.

Burden-bearing.—What is included in the term burden? Whatever makes right living, according to the law of God, difficult to a sincere man—that is a burden. Whatever thing within or without a man, in his nature, in his habits, or in his circumstances, makes it hard for him to live purely and rightly —that is included in this term burden. It may be in his mental constitution; it may be in his bodily health; it may be in the habits of his education; it may be in his relation to worldly affairs; it may be in his domestic circumstances; it may be in his peculiar liabilities to temptation and sin. It includes the whole catalogue of conditions, and influences, and causes, that weigh men down, and hinder them, when they are endeavouring sincerely to live lives of rectitude. What is the meaning, then, of bearing? It is, generally, such a course of conduct towards our fellow-men as shall enable them more easily to carry and manage their infirmities and troubles. It is a spirit of compassion and hopefulness excited in view of men's failures and moral obliquities, rather than a spirit of fault-finding and criticism.[b]

6—8. (6) **fire . . wood**, burning up, as it were, the invading enemy.[a] (7) **tents**, fig. for the open towns and villages. "God will first appear in behalf of those Jews that live in the open country." **magnify . . Judah**, there was danger of this, as inhab. of towns are disposed still to over-estimate themselves. (8) **as God**, or as Messiah, the angel of God.

Yearning for redemption.—The elect yearned, and knew what they yearned for; the nations yearned, and knew not for what. But still they yearned; for as the earth in its long polar night seeks to supply the absence of the day by the generation of the Northern Lights; so does each people in the long night of its heathen darkness bring forth, in its yearning after the life of Christ, a faint and glimmering substitute for the same. From these dreamy longings after the break of day have proceeded oracles, priests, sacrifices, lawgivers, and the like. Men have nowhere given up hoping, nor acquiesced in the world's evil as the world's law. Everywhere they have had a tradition of a time when they were nearer to God than now, a confident hope of a time when they should be brought nearer again.[b]—*Definition of redemption.*—Redemption is the payment of a price, in order to liberate a captive. This idea attaches to the sacrifice of Christ. The redemption is twofold—virtual and actual. Virtual redemption is redemption by price. Actual redemption is redemption in fact; a claiming of the captive. With respect to the human spirit the redemption is actual as well as virtual. In this world we are redeemed from the power of sin, Satan, and the hands of justice. The redemption of the body is not actual, but only virtual; but a time will come when it will be actually delivered, when the captives of the grave shall be claimed.[c]

9, 10. (9) **seek to destroy**, or exert myself to destroy.[a] (10) **spirit . . supplication**, an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit, working penitence and prayer. **look**, *etc.*, Jno.

man ever carried; but a Christ-touched cross is about the lightest thing a man ever carried."—*Beecher.*

"How exquisite is pleasure after pain! Why throbs my heart so turbulently strong, pain'd at thy presence, this redundant joy, like a poor miser, beggar'd by his store?"—*Young.*

b Beecher.

a "The leaders of Judah are to be a fire bursting out on every side, the enemies that beleaguer Jerusalem being the fuel by wh. it is fed."—*Spk. Com.*

"Man and all things were made in concert, to form part of the same great system, of which man's life was to be the key-note, and man himself was to be the head. And the whole system, the whole structure of man and of the world, is moulded to be the theatre of the redemption of the sinner Not in Eden, but there on Calvary, and in heaven, which is the child of Calvary, we see realised the whole idea of God."—*J. B. Brown.*

b Abp. Trench.

c R. Watson.

a "This cannot be applied in all its fulness to the

literal Jerusalem; no such combination of *all nations* against Jerus. has ever been formed."—*Wordsworth.*

b "True repentance arises from the sight by faith of the crucified Saviour. It is the tear that drops fr. the eye of faith looking on Him."—*Fausset.*

a 2 Ki. xxiii. 29.

b 2 Sa. v. 14; Lu. iii. 31.

v. 12. *T. Boston*, xi. 343, iii. 354.

"I felt a tightness grasp my throat, as it would strangle me: such as I felt—I knew it well—some twenty years ago, when my good father shed his blessing on me: I hate to weep, and so I came away."—*Joanna Baillie.*

"The wish, which ages have not yet subdued in man, to have no master save his mood."—*Byron.*

c *Shakespeare.*

xix. 34, 37; Re. i. 7. Indicating wholly different views of the Messiah they had so long rejected and despised. **mourn**, in a spirit of true repentance.*b*

The Spirit promised (*v.* 10).—I. The nature of the Spirit here promised. The spirit of grace and supplication is—1. A very humble and contrite spirit; 2. The spirit of faith; 3. Of earnest and intense desire; 4. Of an eminently holy character; 5. Is very submissive and confiding; 6. A spirit of devout anticipation. II. The motives which should lead us to seek its fulfilment. 1. Because it is the true cause of the advancement of the kingdom of Christ; 2. It will certainly be bestowed; 3. It will sweeten the cup of life; 4. Its influence is vital in connection with all means of grace.

11—14. (11) **Hadadrimmon**, 2 Chr. xxxv. 24. Josiah was slain at or near Megiddo.*a* (12) **family apart**, indicating individual concern, and a mourning of the most solemn character. **Nathan**, a son of David, here representing each branch of the royal family. (13, 14) **Shimei**, Nu. iii. 18, 21. "The highest and the lowest of the priestly order are indicated by the names of Levi and Shimei."

Inconsolable grief.—

I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve: give not me counsel,
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear,
But such a one, whose wrongs do suit with **mine.**
Bring me a father, that so loved his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelmed like mine;
And bid him speak of patience,
Measure his woe the length and breadth of **mine,**
And let it answer every strain for strain
As thus for thus, and such a grief for such
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form.
If such a one will smile, and stroke his beard,
Cry—sorrow, wag! and hem when he should groan;
Patch grief with proverbs; make misfortune drunk
With caudle-water; bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience:
But there is no such man.*c*

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

a "Used here in a moral sense as a bath of healing."—*Spk. Com.*

b "Provision made for the cleansing of all those from the pollutions of sin who truly repent, and are sorry for them."—*Mat. Henry.*

c "The Jews were always very much addicted to

1—3. (1) **that day**, the time of the piercing of Messiah, **ch.** xii. 10. **fountain**, Heb. *makor*, an artificial reservoir for storing water.*a* **sin . . uncleanness**, personal guilt, and ceremonial disability.*b* (2) **cut . . land**, Eze. xxx. 13. **unclean spirit**, or lying spirit, or false pretence to prophetic inspiration.*c* (3) **when**, *etc.*, comp. De. xiii. 1—11; Eze. xiii. 1—9.*d*

The fountain opened (*v.* 1).—I. The fountain that is opened. 1. The plenitude of Divine grace; 2. The freeness of Divine favour. II. The period when it was opened. 1. It was virtually opened in the original scheme of redemption; 2. It was actually opened in the mediatorial work of Christ. III. The people to whom it is opened. 1. Primarily to the Jews; 2. Now also to

the Gentiles. IV. The purpose for which it is opened. 1. For the expiation of sin; 2. For the destruction of sin.[c]

A last song (*v.* 1).—I have a story to tell you this morning, children; a sweet story of a boy in a mission-school, a large boy, sixteen years old, who died in the hospital last week. He was caught in an elevator, had both legs taken off, and was taken to the hospital. He knew that he must die, and sent for his Sunday-school teacher, etc., in graphic style, telling how the boy had loved the Saviour in secret for months, though no one knew it (a note of encouragement to teachers), and now he wanted to sing, "There is a fountain filled with blood," etc., and teacher and pupil sang it together, talking of Jesus between the verses until the last verse was sung, which the teacher finished alone—the boy was dead!

4—6. (4) **rough garment**, lit. *mantle of hair*, comp. Elijah's, 2 Ki. i. 8; see also John Baptist's, Mat. iii. 4. (5) **no prophet**, men would, in true modesty, be unwilling to claim even the name of prophet. (6) **wounds . . hands**, *i.e.* on thy breast, between thy hands. **wounded . . friends**, *i.e.* they are only the marks of my servitude, not idol signs.[a]

The wounds of Christ (*v.* 6).—I. A meditation at the cross. Here regard the wounds of Christ as an antidote—1. To despondency; 2. Coldness of heart; 3. Carelessness; 4. Impatience. II. An inquiry in the Church, where Christ is wounded—1. Through His perfect sympathy with His suffering members; 2. By the inconsistencies of professed believers; 3. This may also be the complaint of individual members; 4. And it may be that of the Church as a whole.

7—9. (7) **my shepherd**, the ruler of the Jews; here it must be referred to Messiah. **my fellow**, *lit.* "the man of my union."[a] **smite**, *etc.*, Mat. xxvi. 31; Mk. xiv. 27. **turn . . ones**, Is. i. 25. "I will show mercy to My little flock, dispirited by the death of their Master, and will quickly show Him to them alive again, to their joy and comfort."[b] (8) **two parts**, this should come to pass in the Rom. siege of Jerus. (9) **refine them**, Is. xlviii. 10; 1 Pe. i. 6, 7.

After the furnace (*v.* 9).—The door of the furnace leads to the closet; precious metals ring truest when thoroughly refined; Christians pray best when they have endured afflictions. I. The exercise; the words remind us of—1. The simplicity of true prayer; 2. Of its earnestness; 3. Of its continuance; 4. Of its faith. II. The promise. 1. Unconditional; 2. Abounding in inferences; 3. Emphatic. III. The fruit of both. 1. Prayer leads to full assurance; 2. To full confession.[c]

Through the fire (*v.* 9).—The people of the East try the quality of gold by the touch, thus: they have a small stone on which they first rub a needle of known quality: they then take the article they wish to try, and rub it near to the mark left by the other, and by comparing the two, they judge of the value of that which they "try." In those regions there are not any marks by which we can judge of the standard, except in the way alluded to. Under such circumstances, there cannot be any wonder that there is much which is not "fine gold;" and such is the skill of some of the goldsmiths, they often deceive the most practised eye. The grand secret of alchymy, by which other metals could

sorcery, charms, and other sorts of divination."—*Lowth.*

d "It is the triumph of Christian faith and charity to love the erring without loving their errors, and to hate the errors without hating the erring."—*Wordsworth.*

e Eta in 400 Sks.

a "The worshippers of Bacchus had an ivy leaf imprinted upon their bodies."—*Maccabees*, bk. iii.

"The detection of one of the false prophets is here dramatically represented."—*Fausset.*

v. 6. *W. H. Henslow*, 1.

a "My equal."—*De Wette.* "My nearest kinsman."—*Hengstenberg.*

b Lowth.

"Reference may also be to the preservation of the Christians at the siege of Jerus., they having retired to Pella when Cestuis Gallus so unaccountably withdrew from Jerusalem."—*Fausset.*

v. 7. *J. Flavel*, i. 343; *R. Erskine*, i. 31, ii. 216; *C. Bradley*, 363; *W. Vickers*, 156; *E. Bather*, iii. 194; *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 444.

c Stems and Twigs.

"A man's purpose of life should be like a river, which was

born of a thousand little rills in the mountains; and when at last it has reached its manhood in the plain, though, if you watch it, you shall see little eddies that seem as if they had changed their minds and were going back again to the mountains, yet all its mighty current flows changeless to the sea. If you build a dam across it, in a few hours it will go over it with a voice of victory. If tides check it at its mouth, it is only that when they ebb it can sweep on again to the ocean. So goes the Amazon or the Orinoco across a continent—never losing its way or changing its direction for the thousand streams that fall into it on the right hand and on the left, but only using them to increase its force, and bearing them onward in its resistless channel."—*H. W. Beecher.*

be transmuted into gold, has never been fully divulged, but multitudes believe that certain individuals have this knowledge. Nor was that invaluable acquirement confined to Hindoos; for "Diocletian caused a diligent inquiry to be made for all the ancient books which treated of the admirable art of making gold and silver, and without pity committed them to the flames, apprehensive, as we are assured, lest the opulence of the Egyptians should inspire them with confidence to rebel against the empire." "The conquest of Egypt by the Arabs diffused that vain science over the globe." Numbers in the East waste their entire property in trying to acquire this wonderful secret. Not long ago a party of the "gold-makers," having heard of a very charitable man, went to him and said they had heard of his good deeds, and in order to enable him to be more benevolent, they offered, at a trifling expense, to make him a large quantity of gold. The kind-hearted creature was delighted at the thought, and furnished the required materials, among which, it must be observed, was a considerable quantity of gold. The time came for making the precious metal, and the whole was cast into the crucible, the impostors taking care to put in an extra quantity of gold. When it was nearly ready, the alchymists threw in some stalks of an unknown plant, and pronounced certain incantations: after which the contents were turned out, and there the astonished man saw a great deal more gold than he had advanced. Such an opportunity was not to be lost; he therefore begged them to make him a much larger quantity, and after some objections the knaves consented, taking good care immediately to decamp with the whole amount. An Armenian gentleman, who died at the age of 82, as is recorded in the *Madras Gazette* of July 22, 1830, had expended the whole of his property, amounting to 30,000 pagodas, in search of the philosopher's stone, but left the world a beggar.

"With crucible and furnace, bursting on his trunk,
His last remains of blissful fervour sunk."[d]

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

1–3. (1) **day . . cometh,** a remarkable day of Divine judgments. **thy spoil,** *i.e.* the spoil of conquered Jerus. (2) **all nations,** the Romans, being masters of the world, are regarded as representing all nations. **taken,** *Heb.* "Be encompassed as in a net." **residue . . city,** as not worth the trouble of removal.[a] (3) **then,** or afterwards.

Day of grace for every man.—It was day at Jerusalem in Christ's time; at Ephesus, in St. John's time; at Corinth and Philippi, in St. Paul's time; at Crete, in Titus' time; at Alexandria, in St. Mark's time; at Smyrna, in Polycarp's time; at Pergamos, in Antipas' time; at Antioch, in Evodius' and Ignatius' time; at Constantinople, in St. Chrysostom's time; at Hippo, in St. Augustine's time. It is now night with most of them, and yet day with us. Jerusalem had a day; and every city, every nation, every church, every congregation, every man, hath a day of grace, hath an accepted time if he do but accept of it; and he may find God if he seek Him in time: but if he let the Sun of

a "There were 40,000 of the inhabitants suffered to go whither they would."—*Josephus.*

"It is recorded of a Roman prince, that when a captive whom he had taken demanded time to deliberate whether he would be the enemy of Rome or not, the prince drew a circle round him, with the end of his rod, and re-

d Roberts.

Righteousness go down, and work not out his own salvation whilst it is called to-day, he must look for nothing but perpetual darkness when time will be swallowed up into eternity, when there will be no time at all.[b]

4, 5. (4) **his feet**, fig. taken fr. Ezekiel's representation of the passing away and returning of the Shekinah, or manifested glory of the Lord.[a] **shall cleave**, prob. this fig. of a natural convulsion, opening a way through the valley, is a sign of the providential intervention by wh. the Christians were enabled to escape. **half . . remove**, this seems to have actually occurred.[b] (5) **Azal**, prob. a name by wh. a part of Olivet was called.[c] **earthquake**, Am. i. 1. **saints**, holy ones, or angels.

Christ coming to judgment.—

As fireflaucht hastily glancing,
Descend shall the maist heavenly King.
As Phœbus in the orient
Lightens in haste the occident,
Sae pleasandly He shall appear
Amang the heavenly cluddis clear,
With great power and majesty,
Above the country of Judie;
As clerkis doth conclude in haill,
Direct above the lusty vale
Of Josaphat and Mount Olivet:
All prophecy there shall complete.
The angels of the orders nine
Environ shall that throne Divine
With heavenly consolation,
Making Him ministration.
In His presence there shall be borne,
The signs of cross and crown of thorn,
Pillar, naillis, scourgis, and spear,
With everilk thing that did Him deir,
The time of His grim passion;
And, for our consolation,
Appear shall, in His hands and feet,
And in His side, the print complete
Of His five woundis precious,
Shining like rubies radious.[d]

6—8. (6) **clear, nor dark**, but gloomy and oppressive. (7) **evening time**, Is. lx. 19, 20, "Towards the close of this twilight-like time of calamity, light shall spring up." (8) **living waters**, *etc.*, Eze. xlvii. 1; Joel iii. 18; Re. xxii. 1. "Supplies of grace are often represented in Scrip. by streams of water." **former sea**, or the Dead Sea. **hinder sea**, the Mediterranean.[a] **summer and winter**, indicating that the streams should be *perennial.*

The changeful and the constant in human life (*v.* 8).—I. The changes in this scene of our human life. 1. Human life has its changes; 2. Human institutions have their changes. II. The constant in this scene of our human life.[b]

Spiritual life.—How like to a Christian a man may be and yet possess no vital godliness! Walk through the British Museum, and you will see all the orders of animals standing in their various places, and exhibiting themselves with the utmost

quired him to decide before he left that circle. So does God deal with sinners."—*Bowes.*

b Spencer.

a Eze. xi. 23, xliii. 2.

"The siege of Jerus. began at the Mount of Olives. Christ's feet stood there in a figure, for it was He who led the armies of Rome; it was He who sent Titus against Jerus."—*Wordsworth.*

b "Upon the earthquake, the mountain before Jerus., *i.e.* Mt. Olivet, cleft on the west side, and then removed for about half a mile towards the E. part of the hill, and there stopped."—*Josephus.*

c Mat. xxiv. 16.

v. 5. *C. J. Goodheart, Blooms. Lec.* 68.

d Sir David Lyndsay.

a "The expression imports that the whole land shall have a plentiful share of these blessings."—*Lowth.*

vv. 6, 7. *T. Manton*, iii. 2, 74; *J. J. Conybeare, Bamp. Lec.* 207; *C. Bradley*, 88.

v. 8. *R. Erskine*, ix. 380.

b Dr. Thomas.

"Since a few minutes can turn the healthiest bodies into breathless carcases, and put those very things which we had principally relied on into the hands of our enemies,

it were little less than madness to repose a distrustless trust in these transitory possessions, or treacherous advantages, which we enjoy but by so fickle a tenure. No; we must never venture to wander far from God, upon the presumption that death is far enough from us; but rather, in the very height of our jollity, we should endeavour to remember, that they who feast themselves to-day, may, themselves, prove feasts for the worms to-morrow."—*Boyle.*

possible propriety. The rhinoceros demurely retains the position in which he was set at first, the eagle soars not through the window, the wolf howls not at night; every creature, whether bird, beast, or fish, remains in the particular glass case allotted to it; but we all know that these are not the creatures, but only the outward semblances of them. Yet in what do they differ? Certainly in nothing which you could readily see, for the well-stuffed animal is precisely like what the living animal would have been; and that eye of glass even appears to have more of brightness in it than the natural eye of the creature itself; there is a secret inward something lacking, which, when it has once departed, you cannot restore. So in the Churches of Christ, many professors are not living believers, but stuffed Christians. They possess all the externals of religion, and every outward morality that you could desire; they behave with great propriety, they keep their places, and there is no outward difference between them and the true believer, except upon the vital point, the life which no power on earth can possibly confer. There is this essential distinction, spiritual life is absent.

9—11. (9) **one Lord**, universally acknowledged by His people. Their idolatry would be for ever put away. **name**, Jehovah. (10) **as a plain**, or "like the *Arabah*, or tract of level country wh. stretches along the lower Jordan to the Dead Sea."[a] **Geba to Rimmon**, meaning, from north to south.[b] **lifted up**, or restored again. **Benjamin's gate**, 2 Ki. xiv. 13. **first gate**, W. of the city. **corner gate**, E. of the city. **tower of Hananeel**, S. of the city.[c] **king's winepress**, Song Sol. viii. 11; in the interior of the city. **safely**, or securely.

Christ's reign on earth (*v.* 9).—I. The incalculable importance of this prophecy—1. To the world at large; 2. To the Church in particular; 3. To every individual of mankind. II. The blessedness of the period to which it refers. 1. Surely it will be a period of great temporal prosperity; 2. Spiritual blessings will most richly abound; 3. God will manifest Himself on earth. Apply:—(1) Seek the establishment of Christ's kingdom in your own souls; (2) Promote its establishment throughout the world.[d]

Triumph of the millennium.—The legend of St. Blaise is of Greek origin. He was bishop over the Christian Church at Sebaste, in Cappadocia, and governed his flock for many years with great vigilance, till the persecution under Diocletian, A.D. 289, obliged him to fly; and he took refuge in a mountain-cave at some distance from the city. This mountain was the haunt of wild beasts (bears, lions, and tigers); but these animals were so completely subdued by the gentleness and piety of the good old man, that, far from doing him any harm, they came every morning to ask his blessing. If they found him kneeling at his devotions, they waited duteously till he had finished, and, having received the accustomed benediction, they retired. Now, in the city of Sebaste, and in the whole province, so many Christians were put to death, that there began to be a scarcity of wild beasts for the amphitheatres. And Agricolaus, the governor, sent his hunters into the mountains to collect as many lions, tigers, and bears as possible; and it happened that these hunters, arriving one day before the mouth of the cave in which St. Blaise had taken refuge, found him seated in front of it, and surrounded

a Spk. Com.

b 2 Ki. xxiii. 8.

c Ne. iii. 1, xii. 39; Je. xxxi. 38.

v. 9. *W. Strong*, 465; *J. H. Stewart*, *Blooms. Lec.* x. 89.

d C. Simeon, M.A.

"The world is preparing day by day for the millennium; but you do not see it. Every season forms itself a year in advance. The coming summer lays out her work during the autumn, and buds and roots are forespoken. Ten million roots are pumping in the streets: do you hear them? Ten million buds are forming in the axles of the leaves: do you hear the sound of the saw or the hammer? All next summer is at work in the world; but it is unseen by us.

by a variety of animals of different species. The lion and the lamb, the hind and the leopard, seemed to have put off their nature, and were standing amicably together, as though there had been everlasting peace between them; and some he blessed with holy words, knowing that God careth for all things that He has made; and to others that were sick or wounded he ministered gently; and others he reprehended because of their rapacity and gluttony. And when the hunters beheld this, they were like men in a dream: they stood astonished, thinking they had found some enchanter. And they seized him, and carried him before the governor; and as they went the good bishop returned thanks to God, and rejoiced greatly that at length he had been found worthy to die for the cause of Christ.

12—15. (12) **plague**, *etc.*, the fig. is of death by famine or consumption. A living death. (13) **tumult**, or panic.[a] (14) **Judah**, *i.e.* the people of the towns and villages of Judah.[b] (15) **plague of the horse**, *etc.*, continuation of *v.* 12.

Preparation for the judgment.—The Gospel of Jesus Christ alone will prepare men aright for the last things wherewith they will have to do. Philosophy and science may teach things useful as to this life. History may bring the experience of the past to bear on the duties of the present in the conduct of states. One system of education may instruct the young how to acquire wealth; another how to spend it with gentility; a third, how to glitter in society; and a fourth, how to make the stores of classical learning all one's own. But Christianity has a higher aim; its object is more extensive. While it overlooks not the things present, it looks onward to things future. While it neglects not the concerns of time, it subordinates them to those of eternity. It brings indeed, and rejoices to hold out, the promise of the life that now is; but, on the other hand, it also brings, and smiles with a brighter and a sweeter look in holding out, the promise of the life which is to come. The last things of man are the most important things. They throw back part of their importance on all that precedes. The chief importance of this life is derived from its connection with that which is to follow. The actions of each passing day, often small and insignificant in themselves, rise into vast importance when considered as indications and evidences of that character which is to be the subject of judgment at the last day. The words which drop idly from the lips cease to be of trifling interest when we recollect that they are all gathered up and registered for judgment. The very thoughts entertained by the mind, and the desires cherished by the heart, cannot be insignificant, if they are to be summoned as witnesses at the bar of God, for or against the man to whom they once belonged. How solemn is the thought of judgment—how important to prepare—the Word of Christ alone tells the proper method.[c]

16—19. (16) **left**, *etc.*, intimating that the relics of the nations shall come into the converting power of the Gospel.[a] **go up**, or share in Christian acts of worship, wh. are here represented by the old Jewish solemnities. (17) **of the earth**, or, of the land. **no rain**, Am. iv. 7, 8. Typical of the refreshings of the Holy Spirit. (18) **family of Egypt**, specially mentioned bec. the threat of *no rain* would not affect a country wh. does

And so 'the kingdom of God cometh not with observation.'" — *Beecher.*

a Ju. vii. 22.

b Zec. xii. 7.

"Traverse the earth,—enter the gorgeous cities of idolatry, or accept the hospitality of its wandering tribes,—go where will-worship is most fantastic, and superstition most gross,—and you will find in man 'a fearful looking for of judgment.' The mythology of their Nemesis may vary,—their Elysium and Tartarus may be differently depicted,—the Metempsychosis may be the passage of bliss and woe,—still the fact is only confirmed by the diversity of the forms in which it is presented." —*Dr. R. W. Hamilton.*

c *John Hambleton.*

a "This v. declares that even the judgment upon the enemies of Israel was not to be universal in its operation. The renewed

not depend on the rains. (19) punishment, or the sin-consequence.

The worship of God (*v.* 17).—I. Press it upon you as a duty and a privilege. 1. It is founded on the relation in which we stand to God; 2. Suggested by the appointment of Divine ordinances; 3. Enforced by the commands and exhortations of the sacred Scriptures; 4. Recommended by the example of the best men who ever lived; 5. Urged by the advantages connected with its observance. II. To show you the consequences of the neglect of that worship which God requires. Apply—(1) To young men; (2) To those who attend, but in a worldly spirit.

Family worship.—In the interesting life of the late Dr. Waugh it is related that it was the regular practice of the Scotch husbandmen, in olden times, to assemble the whole household, for family worship, in the hall or kitchen; in the morning before breakfast, and in the evening before supper. The good man, of course, led their devotions, every one having the Bible in his hand. This was the stated course, even in seed-time and harvest; between five and six in the morning was the time for prayer in these busy seasons. Of the impression made upon his young heart by these domestic services, and by other congenial scenes of domestic piety, Dr. Waugh would often talk, in his own family, with tears in his eyes; and to the purifying and soul-ennobling influence of such scenes not a little of the simplicity, tenderness, and moral elevation of his own character may be justly traced.

20, 21. (20) upon the bells, *i.e.* even upon the smallest and the commonest things. Everything should be consecrated and holy. pots . . bowls, by *pots* some think *helmets* are meant, and the idea is that there will be need of horse or helmet no more, for the very instruments of war shall be consecrated to God's service.[a] (21) Canaanite, fig. from the troubles caused by the children of Israel failing to turn the Canaanites out of Palestine.[b]

The bells of the horses (*v.* 20).—I. Let us hear the horse's bells; they speak of power, holiness, pleasure. journeying, merchandise, toil, such are the uses of horses. II. Let us commend their music, for loudness, clearness, constancy, universality, divinely long. III. Let us go home and tune our bells, the chamber-bell, the shop-bell, the kitchen-bell, the visiting-bell.[c]

Bells on the horses (*v.* 20).—The finest breed of Arabian horses is in this country, and has furnished us with those we make use of for the turf. They are here chiefly articles of luxury, used only in war, or for parade. The governor has a large stud opposite the house where I live, which affords me much pleasure, as I pay them frequent visits. They are small, but finely shaped and extremely active. Of this I had an opportunity of judging yesterday, when the cavalry had a field-day in the great square, which, from the mode of exercise, called to my mind the idea of our ancient tilts and tournaments. The horses were sumptuously caparisoned, being adorned with gold and silver trappings, bells hung round their necks, and rich housings. The riders were in handsome Turkish dresses, with white turbans, and the whole formed to me a new and pleasing spectacle.—*Rooke's Travels to the Coast of Arabia Felix.*[d]

prosperity of Jerusalem would attract many heathen as proselytes."—*Spk. Com.*

John Howard the philanthropist never neglected the duty of family prayer, though there were but one, and that one a servant, to join him; always declaring that, where he had a tent, God should have an altar. Wherever he was when the time came, the duty was attended to. The presence of no one was allowed to interfere with it: and every call of business must wait outside the locked door till it was ended.

a Is. xxiii. 18; Ob. 17; Joel iii. 17.

b Re. xxii. 15.

"No hypocrite or unclean person shall have any share in the society of the faithful."—*Lowth.* "If a man would have the beginnings of heaven, it must be by absolute consecration of everything to God on earth. Let his life be a liturgy, a holy service of acted worship."—*Moore.*

v. 20. *Bp. Hall*, v. 47; *G. Burder*, 5; *T. Thompson*, 269; *Dr. E. Payson*, iii. 529; *J. H. Stewart*, 331.

c C. H. Spurgeon.

d Burder.

MALACHI

Introduction.

I. Author. MALACHI, = "*Messenger of Jehovah;*" of whose history nothing is known. Some have even doubted whether Malachi was a proper name, or merely used to designate an unnamed person commissioned by God to deliver His message. It is hardly needful to say that all this is mere speculation, and is utterly groundless. II. Time. B.C. 436—397. III. Style. Prosaic, but by no means destitute of force and elegance. Frequent reference is made to it in the New Test. (Matt. xi. 10, xvii. 11, 12 ; Mark i. 2, ix. 12, 13 ; Luke i. 17, vii. 27 ; Rom. ix. 13). IV. Theme. He appears to have been raised up to reprove the sins of the people, on account of which he prophesied the rejection of the Jews, and calling of the Gentiles (chap. 1). He predicted also the coming of Christ, and the ministry of His harbinger. John the Baptist —(iii. 1 and iv. 5)—thus closing the sacred canon with enjoining the strict observance of the Mosaic law till the forerunner should appear in the spirit of Elias, *i.e.* John the Baptist, the "Elias which was for to come :" to introduce the Messiah who was to establish the new and everlasting covenant. "The last predictions of Scripture, therefore, are like the earliest. They rebuke corruption and promise deliverance ; they uphold the authority of the first dispensation and reveal the second. The Prophet is still the teacher, and his last words are of the law and spiritual obedience, and, again, of the Gospel and its healing glory" (*Angus*).

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

Part I.—A reproof of the Jews for their numerous sins .....i.—ii.

Part II.—A prediction of the coming of Christ and His forerunner .....iii.—iv.

"Malachi opens his prophecies by reminding the people of God's great and distinguished love towards them and their fathers, which they were so slow to acknowledge. He then reproves them sharply for their sins, and forewarns them that the Lord, of whose delay they complain, will come suddenly to His temple to sit in judgment there, an advent which they will not be able to endure, for it will consume the wicked root and branch, while it brings salvation to the righteous, and closes with a promise of the mission of Elijah the Prophet. This promise, with that contained in chap. iii. 1, is repeatedly referred to in the New Testament, and applied to John the Baptist. The opening words of the prophecy are quoted by the Apostle Paul" (*Barrows*).

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) **to Israel**, better, against Israel. **Malachi**, meaning, "Messenger of Jehovah." He was prob. contemp. with Nehemiah. (2) **loved you**, De. vii. 8, x. 15.[a] **Jacob's brother**, *comp.* Ho. xii. 3—5, 12, 13. (3) **hated Esau**, in Scrip. *hating* often stands for a less degree of love, Lu. xiv. 26. **waste**, God dealt much more severely with Edom than with Israel. **dragons**, jackals; or monsters.[b]

The sovereignty of God's grace (*vv.* 2, 3).—I. The distinguishing mercies which we have received at God's hands. 1. In our national capacity; 2. In our individual capacity. II. Our insensibility in relation to them. 1. By some they are utterly disclaimed; 2. By others received with sad indifference. Learn—(1) To trace all our mercies to their proper source; (2) To improve them to their proper end.[c]

The burden of the Lord (*v.* 1).—The prophecy is here called "burden," a term which frequently occurs elsewhere, and which is usually understood as equivalent to "burdensome prophecy," or such as denounced heavy and grievous things. But from the following passage of Jeremiah, it would seem that that interpretation does not universally hold: "And as for the Prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the Lord, I will even punish that man and his house. Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the Lord answered? and, What hath the Lord spoken? And the burden of the Lord shall he mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the Lord of hosts our God. Thus shalt thou say to the Prophet, What hath the Lord answered thee? and, What hath the Lord spoken? But since ye say, The burden of the Lord; therefore thus saith the Lord, Because you say this word, The burden of the Lord, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of the Lord" (Jer. xxiii. 34—38). This has evidently the air of a prohibition against taking the word in that unfavourable sense. The original term *massa*, from a root signifying to bear, carry, take up, is of doubtful import, and sometimes signifies a burden, and sometimes what was borne, carried, or delivered from one to another, whether a thing or a word, and so was used for a prophecy or message from God, or other speech or doctrine. The Jews, therefore, regarding the messages received from God, and delivered to them by the Prophets, as things grievous and burdensome, called the word thus spoken, a burden, by way of reproach, meaning that it always portended evil, and never good, or in other words, a calamitous prophecy. But God, seeing the wickedness of their hearts, charges them with perverting His word, and forbids them any more so to abuse it. We infer that the term does not originally and exclusively imply a grievous and heavy burden, but simply a message, whether its import were joyous or afflictive. This is confirmed by Zech. xii. 1, where it is prefixed to the promise of good things.[d]

4, 5. (4) **will return**, both Edom and Israel desired to return **to their own lands**, but God had not permitted Edom to succeed

[a] "I have chosen you for My peculiar people, out of pure love and kindness, without any antecedent merits on your side."—*Lowth.*

"The Jews at this time were in an ungrateful temper. They were disappointed and impatient, and murmured against God, and charged Him with unfaithfulness fickleness, and inconstancy. The Prophet replies to these allegations."—*Wordsworth.*

[b] Je. xlix. 17, 18.

[c] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"We are as water, weak, and of no consistence, always descending, abiding in no certain place, unless where we are detained with violence; and every little breath of wind makes us rough and tempestuous, and troubles our faces; every trifling accident discomposes us; and as the face of the waters wafting in a storm, so wrinkles itself, that it makes upon its forehead furrows deep and hollow like a grave: so do our great and little cares and trifles first make the wrinkles of old age, and then they dig a grave for us."—*Bishop Taylor.*

[d] *Bush.*

in its attempt. the border, so named because Edom lay close on the border of the Holy Land. They were to become a special example of Div. judgment.[a] (5) from, better, upon Edom, the border of Israel.[b]

The city of Petra (*v.* 4).—Astonishment, for which language can scarcely find utterance, is the sentiment expressed by every traveller who has been able to explore the magnificent ruins of the once proud metropolis of Idumæa or Edom. A narrow and circuitous defile, surrounded on each side by lofty and precipitous or perpendicular rocks, forms the approach to the desolate yet magnificent scene. The ruins of the city here burst upon the view in their full grandeur, shut in on the opposite side by barren, craggy precipices, from which numerous ravines and valleys branch out in all directions; the sides of the mountains, covered with an endless variety of excavated tombs and private dwellings, present altogether the most singular scene that can well be conceived. In further confirmation of the identity of the site, and the accuracy of the application of the prophecy of Jeremiah, it may be added, that the name of this capital, in all the various languages in which it occurs, implies a rock. The theatre is the first object which presents itself to the traveller on entering Petra from the eastward. Captains Irby and Mangles state that it was entirely hewn out of the live rock. The scene was unfortunately built, and not excavated. Fragments of columns are strewed on the ground in front. This theatre is surrounded by sepulchres. Every avenue leading to it is full of them; and it may be safely affirmed, that one hundred of the largest dimensions are visible from it. Indeed, throughout almost every quarter of this metropolis, the depositories of the dead must have presented themselves constantly to the eyes of the inhabitants, and have almost outnumbered the inhabitants of the living. There is a long line of them, not far from the theatre, at such an angle as not to be comprehended from the view of it, but which must have formed a principal object for the city itself. "The largest of the sepulchres had originally three stories, of which the lowest presented four portals, with large columns set between them; and the second and third, a row of eighteen Ionic columns each, attached to the façade: the live rock being insufficient for the total elevation, a part of the story was grafted on in masonry, and is, for the most part, fallen away. The four portals of the basement open into as many chambers, but all sepulchral, and without any communication between them. In one were three recesses, which seem to have been ornamented with marble, or some other extraneous material. Of all the ruins of Petra, the mausoleums and sepulchres are among the most remarkable; and they give the clearest indication of ancient and long-continued royalty, and of courtly grandeur. Their immense number corroborates the accounts given of their successive kings and princes by Moses and Strabo, though a period of eighteen hundred years intervened between the dates of their respective records concerning them. The structure of the sepulchres also shows that many of them are of a more recent date. Great must have been the opulence of a city which could dedicate such monuments to the memory of its rulers. But the long line of the kings and nobles of Idumæa has for ages been cut off: they are without any representative now, without any

a "Edom is a perpetual waste. It is a desolate monument of Divine wrath."—*Gadsby.*

b "Just across the narrow Jordan valley Edom always lay threateningly upon the skirts of Palestine. It was the country where Israel's most inveterate enemies lived. No other nation pressed on them so constantly or gave them such continual trouble as the Edomites." — *Phillips Brooks.*

"Amid the mausoleums and sepulchres, the remains of temples or palaces, and the multiplicity of tombs—wh. all form, as it were, the grave of Idumæa, where its ancient splendour is interred—there are edifices, the Greek and Roman architecture of wh. decides that they were built long posterior to the era of the Prophets. 'They shall build, but I will throw down.'"—*Horne.*

"We talk of human life as a journey, but how variously is that journey performed! There are those who come forth girt, and shod, and mantled, to walk on velvet lawns and smooth terraces, where every gale is arrested and every beam is tempered. There are others who walk on the Alpine paths of life, against driving

memorial but the multitude and magnificence of their unvisited sepulchres. 'No more shall they boast of the renown of the kingdom; and all her princes shall utterly fail.'"—*Bishop Lowth's Translation of Isaiah xxiv. 12.*[c]

6—8. (6) **honoureth**, is bound to honour. **O priests**, these are esp. addressed, bec. they ought to be the leaders and examples of the nation. **wherein**, *etc.*, comp. *v.* 2. "Asked in a spirit of self-satisfied insensibility." "Impudently persisting in justifying themselves." (7) **bread**, here used generally of the sacrificial offerings. **table**, same as the altar.[a] (8) **blind**, *see* Le. xxii. 22. **is it not evil?** better, "you do not think it evil."[b]

Jehovah lightly esteemed (*vv.* 6—11).—I. An indignant expostulation. II. A solemn accusation. III. An important prediction. 1. It has been already fulfilled in a large measure; 2. The time is coming when it will be completely accomplished.

Presents to officials.—This is designed as a reproof to Israel for offering such sacrifices for the service of God's altar as were imperfect; and such as, if offered to a superior, would not be accepted. Presents in general are acceptable; but circumstances in the East make a considerable difference on this head as to the ideas which would be attached by those people to gifts, and those which are commonly entertained in this part of the world. Presents were indispensably necessary to obtain the favour of the great. Frequently, indeed, the royal revenue was paid in the necessary articles of subsistence; so also was that of individuals; of course such persons would be particularly careful to have what was good and perfect, and would disdain to receive what was otherwise. Agreeably to this statement, Mr. Bruce tells us, that "the revenue of the present governor of Dahalac consists in a goat brought to him monthly by each of the twelve villages. Each vessel that puts in there pays him also a pound of coffee, and every one from Arabia a dollar, or pataka." Chardin observes that "it is the custom of the East for poor people, and especially those in the country, to make presents to their lords of lambs and sheep, as an offering or tribute." In the *Travels of Bertrandon de la Brocquière in* 1432, the ambassador, we are told, "was apprised of the hour when he might make his obeisance to the prince, inform him of the object of his mission, and offer his presents; for it is an established custom in the East never to appear before a superior without bringing presents. His were six pieces of camlet of Cyprus, I know not how many ells of scarlet, forty sugarloaves, a peregrine falcon, two crossbows, and a dozen of bolts."

9—11. (9) **beseech God**, as the national intercessors. **this**, *i.e.* the peril the nation was in of Divine judgment. **your means**, through your unconcern about the character of the offerings and the worship.[a] **regard your persons**, or "lift up the faces of any of you." (10) **for nought**, fruitlessly; *i.e.* if you realised that none of your doings were acceptable to God.[b] (11) **Gentiles**, who shall be taken into Divine favour, when you are cast off for your sins.[c] **incense**, of praise. **offering**, of the broken and contrite heart.

The universal spread of the Gospel (*v.* 11).—I. The Scripture testimony to the ultimate universal spread of the Gospel. II. The same truth is evident from the nature of the case. 1. The

misery, and through stormy sorrows, over sharp afflictions; walk with bare feet and naked breast, jailed, mangled, and chilled."—*Sidney Smith.*

c *Horne.*

a "By your actions you declare how little value you have for the worship of God, since you care not in how slight and contemptuous a manner it is performed."—*Lowth.*

b "Whatever is given as a present in the East, whether of great or small value, a diamond or an orange, a pistol or a knife, a turban or a garment, it should not be in any way damaged or imperfect. If you give a sheep or a lamb, it must not be lame or sick; and if you give a piece of gold, it should be full weight."—*Gadsby.*

v. 6. *C. Barker*, 243; *Dr. W. Outram*, 309; *J. Penn*, ii. 249; *J. Faucett*, iii. 200; *Dr. J. Orr*, i. 89; *J. Saurin*, vi. 191.

a "The priests were specially guilty, because it was their duty to reject improper offerings."—*Spk.Com.*

b "Or, you would be content to have the doors of the temple quite shut up, and God's worship wholly intermitted."—*Lowth.*

need of redemption is universal; 2. The Gospel alone can satisfy this craving of mankind; 3. The Gospel is fitted for universal diffusion. III. The voice of history confirms the conclusions. 1. The importance of the conquests already won by the Gospel; 2. The proved weakness of the only weapons with which it can be assailed. Apply:—(1) Let us submit ourselves to Christ's authority; (2) Pray for the advancement of His kingdom: (3) Cherish and promote the missionary spirit; (4) Contribute cheerfully of our substance to this end.

12—14. (12) **profaned it**, by making it seem no matter what is the *character* of the offerings made to Me. (13) **weariness**, finding no joy in My worship, counting it only a painful drudgery.[a] **snuffed**, or sniffed, as an animal would, who rejects food. **torn**, or stolen. (14) **deceiver**, who brings the imperfect, and makes out that it is the best he has. **corrupt thing**, a female when the law requires a *male*.

Sleeping in chapel.—"A native lad," says a missionary in India, "about ten or eleven years of age, distinguished for his understanding and general good behaviour, being at chapel on a Lord's-day, went to sleep during the sermon; on returning home, I reproved him for so doing, but not harshly. A short time after, going out into the verandah, I found him sobbing most bitterly. I inquired of the other boys the cause; they replied, 'We do not know; he came and sat down, and began to cry, and we cannot pacify him.' I then called him, and, taking him aside, asked the reason of his crying. After some effort he said, 'Oh, sir, I went to sleep at chapel!' and then sobbed louder than before. I said, 'Do you weep because I was angry with you, or because God was angry with you?' His answer was, 'Because God is angry with me; for in going to sleep at worship, I sinned against Him.' He was then informed, that since he repented of his conduct, there was reason to hope that God would forgive him. After hearing this, and reading a passage from the Scriptures suited to his case, which I pointed out to him (Proverbs xxviii. 13), he left me much comforted."[b]—*Weariness* (*v.* 13).—The margin has, instead of "and ye have snuffed at it," "or whereas ye might have blown it away." The marginal reading is, I doubt not, the best. The Jews had complained of the "weariness" of their duties: they were tired of making offerings, and those they did offer were "polluted," or "lame," or "blind;" whereas. instead of those duties being burdensome, they were so light that they might have blown them away. Does a person complain of his numerous labours or duties, another will ask, "What are they? why, a breath will blow them away." "Alas! I have many things to attend to." "Fie on you for talking so; if you blow on them they will go."[c]

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—3. (1) **commandment**, or judgment, sentence. (2) **a curse**, De. xxvii. 15—26. xxviii. 15—68. **curses your blessings**, or turn your blessings into curses; change them for curses.[a] (3) **corrupt your seed**, so as to prevent due harvest. **spread . . feasts**,[b] the dung, etc., should be burned without the

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c Mat. xxi. 43.

v. 11. *J. Mede*, i. 451; *Dr. S. Clarke*, v. 87; *Bp. Jebb*, i. 19; *Bp. Hobart*, i. 144; *J. Cowe*, 291.

a "Ye regard God's service as irksome, and therefore try to get it over by presenting the most worthless offerings."—*Fausset.*

v. 14. *H. Wilkinson*, ii. 162; *Dr. E. Payson*, ii. 332.

b Whitecross.

Anaxagoras being asked what he thought he was born for? answered, "That I may meditate upon heaven." O my soul! what dost thou think thou wast reborn for? Is it not that thou mayest live in heaven? God hath made thee to enjoy communion with Himself; thou need'st not stay one hour on earth, but, with Enoch, spend thy days with God, walk and converse with Jesus Christ in the galleries of His love, with Moses live on the mount of glory.

c Roberts.

a Comp. Ps. xxii. 22.

b Scriptures, sacraments, sermons, Sundays, all have a double

camp, Ex. xxix. 14. take you away, cast you away as if you were dung.[c]

Repentance glorifying God (*v.* 2).—I. The duty prescribed, which honours God's—1. Holiness; 2. Justice; 3. Mercy; 4. Truth. II. The judgment threatened, in relation to—1. Temporal blessings; 2. Spiritual blessings. Learn—(1) What is the proper object of a Christian's ambition; (2) What is the proper object of a Christian's hope.[d]

Curses.—The late Rev. John Brown, of Haddington, once passing the Firth of Forth, between Leith and Kinghorn, had for a fellow-passenger, one who appeared to be a Highland nobleman. Mr. Brown observed, with grief, that he frequently took the name of God in vain; but suspecting that to reprove him in the presence of the other passengers might tend only to irritate him, he forebore saying anything, till he reached the opposite shore. After landing, Mr. Brown, observing the nobleman walking alone, stepped up to him, and said, "Sir, I was sorry to hear you swearing while on our passage. You know it is written, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.'" On this the nobleman, lifting his hat, and bowing to Mr. Brown, made the following reply: "Sir, I return you thanks for the reproof you have now given me, and shall endeavour to attend to it in future; but," added he, "had you said this to me while in the boat, I believe I should have run you through with my sword."[e]

4, 5. (4) might be, or, might stand fast.[a] For the breach of the covenant they must be held responsible. (5) was, implying that you, his descendants, have changed it into a covenant of woe. life, or prosperity. peace, or security.[b] fear, reverential, godly fear, expressed in earnest and careful keeping of My ordinances.

The ministerial office (*vv.* 5—7).—Of the minister of the Gospel we see—I. His obligations. 1. Covenant made with the Jewish priesthood; 2. The Christian priesthood are consecrated to the special service of the altar. II. His office. 1. The Jewish priests were messengers of God; 2. Such are Christian ministers. III. His encouragements. 1. The Jewish priests were to turn many from their iniquity; 2. Still greater encouragements are ours. Address—(1) Those who are about to enter the ministry; (2) Those who desire to benefit from the ministry.[c]

6, 7. (6) iniquity, self-willedness, perverseness. walked with me, conducted all his relationships and duties. equity, honesty. "He directed all his actions by the rule of My laws." turn, *etc.*, by his excellent example and hallowed influence.[a] (7) seek the law, *i.e.* to know its applications to particular cases.[b] messenger, or interpreter.

Regret.—Needs must it sit heavily on their spirits, that being, in God's prime intention, and their own, selected heralds of peace, and dispensers of treasures inestimable, without price, to them that have no peace; they find in the discharge of their commission that they are made the greatest variance and offence—a very sword and fire both in house and city over the whole earth. This is that which the sad Prophet Jeremiah laments: "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me, a man of strife and contention." And although Divine inspiration must certainly

edge; if used well, they lead men on to heaven; but if despised or misused, they aggravate men's sin, and increase their condemnation." — *Wordsworth.*

b "The worshippers of the Hindoo god Siva have to this day a spot on their foreheads made of the ashes of cow's dung."—*Gadsby.*

c 1 Ki. xiv. 10.

d *C. Simeon, M.A.*

e *Whitecross.*

a Nu. iii. 5, etc.

b Nu. xxv. 12, 13.

v. 5. *T. St. John,* ii. 285.

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

a Ja. v. 19, 20.

b De. xvii. 9—11, xxiv. 8. See also Ezr. vii. 10; Hag. ii. 11, 12.

v. 6. *J. F. Durand,* ii. 1.

v. 7. *R. Hussey,* 276; *Dr. Collyer,* 364; *W. Bishop,* ii. 47.

"Man's uncertain life is like a rain-drop hanging on the bough, amongst ten thousand of its sparkling

kindred, the remnants of some passing thunder shower, which have their moments, dropping one by one, and which shall soonest lose its perilous hold we cannot guess."—*Joanna Baillie.*

have been sweet to those ancient Prophets, yet the irksomeness of that truth which they brought was so unpleasant unto them that everywhere they call it a burden. Yea, that mysterious book of Revelation, which the great Evangelist was bid to eat, as it had been some eye-brightening electuary of knowledge and foresight; though it were sweet in his mouth and in the learning, it was bitter in his belly, bitter in the denouncing. Nor was this hid from the wise poet Sophocles, who in that place of his tragedy where Tiresias is called to resolve king Œdipus in a matter which he knew would be grievous, brings him in bemoaning his lot that he knew more than other men. For surely to every good and peaceable man, it must in nature needs be a hateful thing to be the displeaser and molester of thousands; much better would it like him doubtless to be the messenger of gladness and contentment, which is his chief intended business to all mankind, but that they resist and oppose their own true happiness.[c]

c *Milton.*

8—10. (8) ye, the priests of Malachi's days. departed, De. xvii. 10. stumble . . law, by misrepresenting it. and making it appear to be hard and unreasonable. (9) contemptible, *etc.*, for while men use the liberty wh. unfaithful priests allow, they despise them in their hearts. bec. of their unfaithfulness. partial, *i.e.* having respect of persons.[a] (10) against his brother, for a man's wrong-doing is never merely an injury to himself; it is an aggravation of the sin that it hurts others.

a 1 Ti. v. 21.

The chestnut tree and the ant.—In full bloom a chestnut tree stood high and spread wide. Looking on itself with satisfaction, its words were overheard by a little ant, saying: "What a noble tree I am! and now so full of flower; well may admiration be bestowed upon me." "Ah!" thought the ant, "you are right: very great, very lovely! and further, these beautiful flowers are the blossoms of coming precious fruits;" and the little ant regarded its own self with the humiliation which very small things may well feel in contrast with things very noble. "You stated only what is most true," said the ant, modestly addressing the chestnut; "but the admiration of a diminutive insect like me you will scarcely deign to consider worthy of your notice." "I am sensible of your kindness," replied the chestnut; "and at the same time think the smallest insect worthy of as true admiration as the greatest of trees." "What can he mean?" thought the ant, with a feeling of wonder. But the chestnut again spoke. "You are small, very small; but insect life is higher in the scale of creation than vegetable life: consequently you are on this ground my superior." "How wonderfully humble!" thought the little ant. But the chestnut proceeded to say: "You have instincts which no trees possess, and greater even than have rational creatures; whilst the prudence and industry of your species have made them patterns to those by whose labours fields are sown and reaped, and whose hands execute the most glorious works of art. I remember, too, that however great in statur now, I was once but a slender blade, even as small as yourself. Then also we are both the offspring of the same earth; the thought of which is enough to humble the pride of the loftiest, and lower the importance of the high-minded to the level of the lowest. Looking at each other, then, let us together learn some good lessons: me, that I am brother to the little ant; and

v. 9. *W. Dow*, i. 134.

"The nature of the profession exercises a great influence on longevity; thus out of 100 of each of the following professions the number of those who attain their seventieth year is—among clergymen, 42; agriculturists, 40; traders and manufacturers, 33; soldiers and clerks, 32; lawyers, 29; artists, 28; professors, 27; physicians, 24; so those who study the art of prolonging the lives of others are most liable to die early, probably on account of the effluvia to which they are constantly exposed."—*Abeille Médicale.*

you, that you are not too small to claim kindred with the greatest: for 'have we not all one Father?'"[b]

11—13. (11) **abomination**, a thing regarded as such by the holy law of God. **loved**, *i.e.* ought to have loved and served: or "in that he hath loved a heathen woman."[a] (12) **master and scholar**, "a prov. expression for every living member of the transgressor's family."[b] Heb. "He that wakes and he that answers." **him that offereth**, *comp.* Ne. xiii. 28, 29. (13) **with tears**, *etc.*, these were shed by the repudiated Jewish wives.

Marriage (*v.* 13).—I. Marriage is represented in its claims as a social compact. 1. She is thy wife; here is the peculiarity of the relation; 2. Thy companion: here is the propriety and solace of the relation; 3. Of thy youth; here is the tenderness of the relation; 4. Of thy covenant; here is the obligation and fidelity of the relation. II. As a religious institution. 1. In its formation; 2. In its design; 3. In its connection with the altar; 4. In its responsibilities; 5. In its duties; 6. In the typical use made of it.

"*The master and the scholar*" (*v.* 12).—This should rather be rendered, "the watchman and the answerer," as Arias Montanus has it, *vigilantem et respondentem*. The true explanation is probably to be brought from the temple service, in which there was appointed a constant watch, day and night, by the Levites: and among them this seems to have belonged particularly to the singers (1 Chron. ix. 33). Now the watches in the East are, to this day, performed by a loud cry from time to time, by the watchmen, one after another, to mark the hour, and that very frequently, in order to show that they are constantly attentive to their duty. Tavernier remarks that the watchmen in the camps go their rounds, crying one after another, "God is one. He is merciful;" and often add, "Take heed to yourselves." The hundred and thirty-fourth Psalm gives us an example of the temple-watch. The whole Psalm is nothing more than the alternate cry of the two different divisions of the watch. The allusion is similar in the passage before us. (See Lowth on Is. lxii. 6).[c]—*The will of unfallen man.*—The understanding and will never disagreed; for the proposals of the one never thwarted the inclinations of the other. Yet neither did the will servilely attend upon the understanding, but as a favourite does upon his prince, where the service is privilege and preferment; or, as Solomon's servants waited upon him, it admired its wisdom, and heard its prudent dictates and counsels, both the direction and the reward of its obedience. It is, indeed, the nature of this faculty to follow a superior guide, to be drawn by the intellect: but then it was drawn as a triumphant chariot, which at the same time both follows and triumphs: while it obeyed this, it commanded the other faculties. It was subordinate, not enslaved, to the understanding: not as a servant to a master, but as a queen to her king, who both acknowledges a subjection, and yet retains a majesty.[d]

14—16. (14) **wherefore?**[a] as if you did not know well the reason. **wife of thy youth**, thy proper and honourable Jewish wife. **covenant**, *comp.* Pr. ii. 17. (15) **make one**, *i.e.* Adam, and the woman, Eve, out of him, so that the two were really

b Spiritual Fables

a "This is the reproof of those who contracted marriages with foreigners, and repudiated their Jewish wives. To intermarry with the heathen would defeat the purpose of Jehovah, who was the common Father of the Israelites in a peculiar sense in wh. He was not Father of the heathen."—*Fausset.*

b Spk. Com.

vv. 13—15. *W. Jay*, viii. 223. "Married people live longer than unmarried ones, and a tall man is likely to live longer than a short one. Until the fiftieth year women have a better chance of life than men, but beyond that period the chances are equal. Sixty-five persons out of 1,000 marry. The months of June and December are those in which marriages are most frequent. Children born in the spring are generally stronger than those born in other seasons. Births and deaths chiefly occur at night. The number of men able to bear arms is but one eighth of the population."—*Abeille Médicale.*

c Bush.

d South.

a Or, Why does God thus refuse to accept our offerings?

one. residue, or excellency. Therefore His thus making the *double one* must have been in infinite wisdom.[b] to your spirit, lest you should be led away into wrong-doing by carnal passion. (16) putting away, or the divorcement of honourable first wives.[c]

"*And did not he make one?*" (*v.* 15).—This, Madan contends (*Thelypthora*, vol. i. p. 135), should be rendered, "and did not one make?" The mass of commentators, he remarks, misled by translators, understand the words as signifying that in the beginning God made but one woman; He had the residue of the Spirit, *i.e.* of power, and therefore could have made more women for Adam, if He had seen fit. To this interpretation he objects that the original word cannot signify one woman, inasmuch as it is not of the feminine, but of the masculine gender. Besides which, to read it in this manner requires an unnatural transposition of the words. He prefers, therefore, the rendering, "Did not one make? as v. 10, "Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Did not one, or The one, make both you and your Jewish wives? Did He not form both of you naturally of the same seed of Abraham, and spiritually by the same holy dispensation and ordinances? And He hath (or, hath He not) the residue of the Spirit? *i.e.* hath He not the same power He ever had? Is His hand shortened at all so that He cannot complete your restoration if He pleases, or punish you still more severely if ye continue disobedient to His will? And wherefore one? What did He seek? A godly seed; or, Heb., a seed of God, a holy seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, i.e. to your temper, your affections. Curb your irregular passions, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth, by putting her away, and taking these idolatresses; for I the Lord hate putting away." The consideration of the relation in which they stood to Jehovah—He their common Father, they His professing children—was one argument against their separating. Another was, that as the Lord sought a godly seed in their off-spring, by their being devoted to Him in their earliest infancy, then brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, this design would be defeated by their taking idolatrous women, who, instead of devoting the children to Jehovah, would be apt to bring them up to the worship of their idols, and an ungodly seed would be the consequence. Lastly, He had forbidden divorce from the beginning, for He hateth putting away at any rate; but how much more to see his own professing daughters put away, that his own professing sons might marry the daughters of a strange god. This was indeed doing an abominable thing, which God hated.[d]

17. wearied, worn out His patience.[a] evil is good, *comp.* Is. v. 19, 20. "God answers the murmurs of the godless sceptics by an announcement of judgment to come."

Wearying God (*v.* 17).—I. This may be done many ways. 1. By our carelessness; 2. Opposition; 3. Unteachableness; 4. Unbelief; 5. Want of zeal; 6. Inconsistency. II. The method here specially noted, woe with your words. III. It is wearying with questions. IV. By denial of the difference between good and evil. V. By disbelief of coming judgment.[e]

[b] This is both an appeal for the permanency of a first marriage, and an appeal against polygamy.

[c] "Can anything justify your violent and treacherous conduct towards your wives, wh. is contrary to moral sense, and a violation of the moral laws?"—*Spk. Com.*

v. 15. *Bp. Lake*, 53; *Alex. Pirie*, iii. 248.

"Major C. says that, in certain Amazonian tribes, the bridegroom is subjected to a singular test. On the day of the marriage, while the wedding festivities are going on, his hand is tied up in a paper bag filled with fire ants. If he bears this torture smiling and unmoved, he is deemed fit for the trials of matrimony."—*Agassiz.*

"First get an absolute conquest over thyself, and then thou wilt easily govern thy wife."—*Fuller.*

[d] *Bush.*

[a] These words properly begin a new discourse.

The remedy for hard times is to have patience.

[e] *Dr. Bonar.*

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—3. (1) **messenger**, Jno. Baptist.[a] **the Lord**, or Messiah. "Malachi gives to Christ the name wh. belongs to God only."[b] Heb. *Ha-adon.* **seek, delight . . in**, prob. spoken in irony. (2) **abide**, stand the testing wh. His coming must prove to be. **fuller's soap**, Je. ii. 22.[c] (3) **purge**, "the orig. notion of the root is cleansing or purifying by filtering or straining, but it also admits the notion of melting by fire."

The day of Christ's coming (*v.* 2).—I. Observe there is a momentous period for man to anticipate. 1. Note the distinguishing characteristics of that day; 2. The inevitable certainty of that day. II. There is a momentous inquiry for men to consider. 1. This inquiry shall be vindicated; 2. It shall be applied; 3. It is to be advised upon. Apply:—(1) We have an argument against delay in the hardening influence of sin; (2) In the importance of the matters at issue; (3) In the uncertainties of human life.[d]

Refining the gold.—When gold is mixed with a greater quantity of counterfeit metal, so that of both becomes one mass or lump, though each metal still retains and keeps its nature diverse from the other, yet can they not be outwardly discerned asunder by the eye. But, when the refiner comes and severs them, then will each metal appear in his own outside and in his proper colour, whereby they are easily discerned asunder one from the other. Such must the state of the Church needs be when an apostasy shall rise out of the bowels thereof. And such do we affirm was the state of the Church of Christ, in that great prevailing apostasy from which we are separated. The purer metal of the Christian body was not outwardly discernible from the base and counterfeit while one outside covered them both. But when the time for refining came, then was our Church, not first founded in the faith (God forbid!), but a part of the Christian body, newly refined from such corruptions as time had gathered. As gold refined begins not then first to be gold, though it began first to be refined; so our Church began, not a hundred years ago, to be a Church, though then it first began to be a Reformed Church.[e]

4—7. (4) **pleasant**, acceptable, Je. vi. 20. (5) **witness**, bringing to light all iniquity in practical living and relationship, so that it may be judged and punished. **sorcerers**, 2 Chr. xxxiii. 6. **false swearers**, Zec. viii. 17. (6) **change not**, therefore judgment must surely come; but mercy bears long.[a] (7) **return**, Zec. i. 3. "I am ready to be reconciled to you upon your repentance."

Ever the same (*v.* 6).—I. What God's immutability consists in. He is unchangeable—1. In His essence; 2. His perfections; 3. His purposes; 4. His laws; 5. His promises; 6. His threatenings. II. The use of the doctrine. 1. Encouragement to the righteous; 2. Warning to the wicked.[b]

The love of God (*v.* 6).—God's love to His people is so firm and stable, that nothing whatever can possibly null or alter it; nothing can possibly cast them out of His heart. If anything could do it, it would be their sinning against Him, and their

a Is. xl. 2; Mat. xi. 10; Mk. i. 2; Lu. vii. 27.

b *Pusey.*

c "A herb the fullers used to take spots out of clothes."—*S. Jerome.*

v. 1. *W. Pearson*, 144; *Dr. W. Harris*, 561; *C. Bradley*, xi. 32; *J. Jowett*, 344; *W. Norris*, 42; *Bp. Horsley*, iii. 1; *H. McNeile*, iv. 38; *J. Newton*, iv. 40; *E. Cooper*, i. 308.

d *J. Parsons.*

The carat seed, or seed of the Abyssinian coral flower, was formerly employed in weighing gold. Hence the expression "22 carats fine," etc., meaning that out of 24 parts, 22 are gold, and the rest alloy. —"Here's the note how much your chain weighs to the utmost carat."—*Shakespeare.*

e *Mede.*

a Am. ix. 9.

v. 6. *A. Gray*, 535; *Dr. D. Whitby*, i. 71; *Dr. R. Warren*, iii. 366; *Dr. J. Hunt*, ii. 41; *Bouillier*, 156; *J. Reeve*, i. 41; *Dr. S. Clarke*, i. 143.

b *W. Whythe.*

"One of the deaf and dumb pupils in the institution of Paris, being desired to express his idea of the eternity of the Deity, replied, 'It is duration, without beginning or end;

existence, without bound or dimension; present, without past or future. His eternity is youth, without infancy or old age; life, without birth or death; to-day, without yesterday or tomorrow.'"
c Edward Pearce, 1687.

breakings with Him; but these do not, cannot do it, so He has said, If they sin, I will correct them for their sin, "but My loving-kindness I will not take from them." God does not love the sins of His people—no, He hates them; but He loves their persons, notwithstanding their sins. God hath love from eternity, and He will love to eternity.[c]

8, 9. (8) rob God, or defraud Him of His just rights. tithes and offerings, Ne. xiii. 10—12. (9) cursed,[a] with scarcity in your fields, bec. you have withheld the Lord's dues. "In trying to defraud God we only defraud ourselves."

God's rights (*v.* 8).—I. How can a man rob God? 1. By not loving Him; 2. By not obeying Him; 3. By not using our influence for Him; 4. By not giving our all to Him. II. The awful nature of the sin. 1. Audacious; 2. Reckless; 3. Desperate; 4. Ungrateful.[b]

Robbing God—The benefactor and the robber.—One Sunday a gentleman was going to church. On his way he saw a number of boys playing on the common. He wanted very much to show them how wrong it was for them to be so doing; but he knew that if he began to reprove them they would not listen to him. So he walked leisurely up to them, and sat down on the grass. Presently, in a pleasant, familiar tone, he said, "Boys, I want to tell you a story." Directly they all gathered unsuspectingly around him, and he began as follows: "There was once a good man who was noted for his kindness and liberality. At the time of which I speak he was on a journey. As he was pursuing his way along a lonely road, he met a man who represented himself as having suffered a great loss, in consequence of which he was in deep distress. With his usual kindness the good man instantly drew out his purse; and after examining it, he said, 'I have only seven pounds with me, but I think that with one pound I can get to the end of my journey, and you shall have the rest.' With this he handed the man the six pounds. Was not that generous? Would not you have thought that the beggar must have gone off, feeling very grateful and contented? Certainly, we should have expected this. But he did no such thing. He was not a beggar at all, but a robber; and seeing that the good man had still one pound in his purse, he knocked him down with a club, and stole his last pound from him." The boys were very indignant on hearing this. They all cried out against the shameful conduct of the robber. One of them went so far as to say he didn't think anybody could be found quite so wicked as that. "Now, stop," said the gentleman; "let me tell you, boys, this is just what you are doing. God has given you freely six days out of the seven for your own use. He has kept only one for Himself, to be kept holy, and spent in worshipping Him; and yet you are so mean as to rob Him even of that!" The boys hung down their heads. They had not a word to say, but broke up their play and went off.

10—12. (10) all the tithes, those wh. you have so sinfully withheld. storehouse, or treasure-house:[a] appointed for their reception. meat, or provision for My priests, etc. room enough, lit. *to superabundance.* (11) devourer, very poss. the locust. cast her fruit, as not being nourished enough to mature it. (12) delightsome land, Da. xi. 16; Zech. vii. 14.

a Ne. xiii. 10—12.
v. 7. *T. Manton*, iii. 2, 14; *J. Hill*, 303; *J. Wesley*, v. 185; *T. St. John*, ii. 261.

v. 8. *J. Foster*, ii. 339.

b W. Whythe.

"So long as we stand in need of a benefit, there is nothing dearer to us; nor anything cheaper when we have received it. And yet a man may as well refuse to deliver up a sum of money that's left him in trust, without a suit, as not to return a good office without asking; and when we have no value any further for the benefit, we do commonly care as little for the author. People follow their interest; one man is grateful for his convenience, and another man is ungrateful for the same reason."
—*L'Estrange.*

a He. x. 38; Da. i. 2.

v. 11. *J. Potts*, 419.

Experimental evidence (*v.* 10).—I. We ought to prove God. 1. We need a blessing; 2. He has promised a blessing. II. How ought we to prove Him? 1. In prayer; 2. With faith; 3. In the means of grace; 4. In the way of duty. III. The result of proving Him. 1. Peace; 2. Joy; 3. Satiety.[b]

"*Bring ye all the tithes.*"—"Some years ago," says one, "I recollect reading a striking sermon by the late Mr. Simpson, of Macclesfield; the subject, I think, was Christian liberality; but what most forcibly struck my mind, was a passage quoted from Malachi iii. 10: 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse,' etc. I cannot describe how my mind was impressed with the manner in which Jehovah here condescended to challenge His people, when He says, 'And prove Me now herewith," etc. Suffice it to say, that the subject made such an impression, I found it my duty to do more for the cause of God than I ever had done. I did so, and on closing that year's accounts, I found that I had gained more than in any two years preceding it. Some time afterwards, I thought the Redeemer's cause had an additional claim, as the place in which we worshipped Him wanted some repairs. The sum I then gave was £20; and in a very little time afterwards I received £40, which I had long given up as lost."[c]

13—15. (13) **stout,** Job xxi. 14. (14) **vain,** there is no real advantage to be gained from it.[a] **mournfully,** in the garb of humiliation and penitence. (15) **proud,** Pr. xxi. 24; Is. xiii. 11; Ps. cxix. 21, 51, 69, 78.

A good service (*v.* 14).—I. The service of God. 1. Voluntary; 2. Solemn; 3. Arduous; 4. Profitable. II. The objections to it. 1. They arise from misunderstanding; 2. From disinclination; 3. From hatred. III. Its advantages. 1. It gives present joy; 2. It promises future glory.[b]

Universalism.—A pious minister of respectable talents, and formerly a preacher among the Universalists, was led, from the following incident, seriously to examine the grounds of his false doctrines. He was amusing his little son by telling him the story of the Children in the Wood The boy asked, "What became of the little innocent children?" "They went to heaven," replied the father. "What became of the wicked old uncle?" "He went to heaven too." "Won't he kill them again, father?" said the boy.[c]—*Flattery reproved.*—Damocles, a courtier of Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, having lauded in the highest terms the happiness of royalty, received the following striking reproof from his master. He was placed upon a kingly throne, in the midst of a luxurious banquet. The tables were loaded with choicest food; gold, silver, and precious stones gleamed and sparkled in every direction; but, as he admired his exalted position, he looked upwards, and saw, exactly over his head, a keen-edged sword, suspended by a single hair. His happiness was gone in an instant, and with it his estimate of the felicity of kings.

16—18. (16) **feared,** sincerely. **book of remembrance,** *comp.* Ex. xxxii. 32; Ps. lxix. 28; Re. iii. 5. **thought upon,** or highly esteemed. (17) **jewels,** or special treasure.[a] (18) **discern,** see clearly that God makes and keeps distinctions.

Precious jewels.—Describe regalia of England. Speak of

b W. Whythe. "The being of grace must go before the increase of it; for there is no growth without life, no building without a foundation. Put a dry stick into the ground, and dress and water it as much as you will, it will continue the same till it rot; but set a living plant by the side of it, and though much less at first, yet it soon begins to shoot, and in time becomes a wide-spreading tree." — *Lavington.*

c Cheever.

a "A rebuke of persons who were impatient under temporal trials, and murmured against God, bec. they did not at once reap the fruit of their service in temporal prosperity."—*Spk. Com.*

v. 14. *De la Donespâ*, 418.

b W. Whythe.

c Whitecross.

"Holiness in the heart will be holiness in the life too; not some good actions, but a good conversation; a uniform even tract of life, the whole revolution of it regular."—*Leighton.*

a Tit. ii. 14; 1 Pe. ii. 9.

Abp. Secker, ix. 278; *H. White*, 180; *W. Mayers*, 354; *T. Arnold*,

i. 267; *Dr. C. J. Vaughan*, 90; *J. Abernethy*, ii. 384; *J. Bretland*, i. 266; *T. Spencer*, 110; *T. Tate*, 233; *A. Roberts*, iv. 33; *T. Manton*, iv. 1016; *D. Wilcox*, iii. 97; *Dr. J. Grant*, 149; *J. Scott*, 327; *T. Knowles*, ii. 287.

b Hive.

"Incredible as it may appear to ignorance, on whose admiring eyes it flashes rays of light, science proves that the diamond is formed of the very same matter as common, dull, black coal. It boasts no native light; and dark in the darkness as the mud or rock where it lies imbedded, it shines, if with a beautiful, yet with a borrowed splendour. How meet an emblem of the priceless jewels that adorn the Saviour's crown!"—*Guthrie.* "Grace is a perpetually flowing fountain. It is compared to water, which serves to cool men when they are in a burning heat: so grace cools the soul when it has been even scorched and burnt up by the sense of Divine wrath and displeasure. Water is cleansing; so is grace. Water is fructifying; so is grace. And water is satisfying; it satisfies the thirsty, and so does grace. (John iv. 13, 14.)" —*T. Brooks.*

c R. T. S.

jewels. Show one or two; as rings, brooches, etc. The text introduces to us the crown jewels of the King of kings. Some Roman ladies were once talking about and showing their jewels. One went out to fetch hers, and presently returned, leading her children, and saying, "Here are my jewels." The great King places His children before us and says, "These are My jewels," What do God's children, as jewels, remind us of? 1. Like jewels, they are rare. "Little flock;" many common stones and pebbles, few pearls and diamonds. 2. Like jewels, they are beautiful, brilliant, ornamental; shine, "lights in the world." 3. Like jewels, they are found in strange and unlikely places. Pearl diving. Mine. 4. Like jewels, they are obtained only with much risk and trouble. 5. Like jewels, they have to be cut and polished, to bring out their beauty and value. "Furnace of affliction." Interior of jeweller's shop. Wheels, files, etc. God superintends the process. "Refiner of silver." When the Koh-i-noor was recut, the Duke of Wellington superintended the process. 6. Like jewels, they are very valuable; hence they cost a great deal. "Bought with a price." "Elect, precious." Wars have been occasioned by desire to possess jewels of great value. 7. Like some jewels, some Christians have a great historical interest (name some famous gems, as the Pitt diamond, etc.). Thus Luther, Knox, Calvin, Wesley, etc. 8. Like jewels, they are carefully preserved. Casket. Safe. "Kept by the power of God," etc. Regalia of England in Tower of London. 9. Like jewels, they are sometimes collected and exhibited. Grand occasions when jewels are worn. Queen's drawing room. Court festivals. So Christians in meetings of the Church here, and in the great gathering of the Church triumphant. May we all be found in that day as gems in the Redeemer's crown.[b]

A young minister.—One dark night in winter, a young gentleman was requested by his father to light an aged friend to his home in a country village. On the road the old gentleman said to him, "My young friend, will you try to remember the following words? 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not,'" Mal. iii. 16—18. The young gentleman went home and learned the passage. It was so infixed upon his mind that he never forgot it; and was adopted as a favourite text. He became an active and pious minister, the rector of a large parish, and had the care of two thousand souls, who all looked up to him as a father and a friend. His influence reached far and wide, and his example produced the most beneficial effects, not only among his own people, but in the extensive city near which he resided. This anecdote should encourage others to improve every opportunity that may present itself of implanting Divine truth on the youthful mind.[c]

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—3. (1) burn, *see* Joel ii. 31; Ho. vii. 4.[a] neither .. branch, Eze. xvii. 8, 9; Am. ii. 9. (2) sun,[b] *etc.*, Lu. i. 78. wings, or skirts.[c] grow up, or, "leap in wantonness, as stall-fed animals leap about, when loosed from the stall." (3) tread down, as oxen tread the wheat on the threshing-floors.

Christ the light of the world (*v.* 2).—1. Christ is the source of light; 2. Of heat; 3. The centre of the spiritual world; 4. The centre of attraction.[d]—*Dies iræ* (*vv.* 1—6).—Here we have—I. A great warning, *v.* 1. II. The consolation of the faithful, *v.* 2. III. The mighty victory, *v.* 3. IV. The unchangeable standard of holiness, *v.* 4. V. The world's last sermon.[e]

Light from Christ destructive of evil.—There is a beautiful fable of the ancient mythology, to the effect that Apollo, who represents the sun, killed a huge poisonous serpent by arrows surely aimed and shot from afar. It intimates that sunbeams darting straight from heaven destroy many deadly things that crawl upon the ground, and so make the world a safer habitation. The parable is, in this respect, a stroke of truth, and it coincides with a feature of the eternal covenant. Light from the face of Jesus, when it is permitted to stream right into a human heart, destroys the noisome things that haunt it, as Apollo's arrows slew the snake.[f]—*Rev. Dr. Livingstone.*—The late Dr. Livingstone, of America, and Louis Bonaparte, ex-king of Holland, happened once to be fellow-passengers, with many others, on board of one of the North River steamboats. As the doctor was walking the deck in the morning, and gazing at the refulgence of the rising sun, which appeared to him unusually attractive, he passed near the distinguished stranger, and, stopping for a moment, accosted him thus: "How glorious, sir, is that object!" pointing gracefully with his hand to the sun. The ex-king assenting, Dr. Livingstone immediately added, "And how much more glorious, sir, must be its Maker, the Son of Righteousness!" A gentleman who overheard this short incidental conversation, being acquainted with both personages, now introduced them to each other, and a few more remarks were interchanged. Shortly after, the doctor again turned to the ex-king, and with that air of polished complaisance for which he was so remarkable, invited him first, and then the rest of the company, to attend morning prayer. It is scarcely necessary to add that the invitation was promptly complied with.—"To you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." It is true He speaks more especially of His incarnation, or visible appearance in the world: but, by this manner of speaking, He intimates withal that this Sun of Righteousness is always shining upon His faithful people, more or less, in all ages, from the beginning to the end of the world. For in that it is said, "He shall arise," it is plainly supposed that He was the Sun of Righteousness before, and gave light unto the world, though not so clearly as when He was actually risen. As we see and enjoy the light of the sun long before he riseth, from the first dawning of the day, though it grows clearer and

a Comp. Mat. iii. 12.

b Is. lx. 1, 2.

c "So called to signify that his light consists in clearing up men's understandings, and chasing away the darkness of their minds; whose rays and kindly warmth will heal all the diseases of the soul."—*Lowth.*

v. 2. *R. Robinson*, i. 455; *R. Taylor*, i. 101; *Bp. Wilson*, i. 281; *W. Lagst*, ii. 331; *C. J. Vaughan*, 103; *F. Goode*, 406; *R. P. Buddicom*, i. 278; *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 477.

d *Whythe.*

e *Dr. Bonar.*

f *Arnot.*

"'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' But although we have sin still abiding in us, and, like the bias in a bowl, warping us to the world, yet that vital seminal principle of the grace of God in Christ always keeps its ground, its life and tendency towards heaven, and wears out, wastes, and gradually subdues the contrary tendency of sin and corruption."—*Sir M. Hale.*

g R. T. S.

clearer all along, as he comes nearer and nearer to his rising; so the Sun of Righteousness began to enlighten the world, as soon as it was darkened by sin; the day then began to break, and it grew lighter and lighter in every age. Adam himself saw something of this light, Abraham more; "Abraham rejoiced to see My day," saith this glorious Sun: "He saw it and was glad" (John vii. 56). David and the Prophets after him saw it more clearly, especially this, the last of the Prophets: he saw this Sun in a manner rising so that he could tell the people that it would suddenly get above the horizon. "The Lord whom you seek;" saith he, "shall suddenly come to His temple." Mal. iv. 2.[g]

4—6. (4) **law**, Ex. xx. 3. (5) **Elijah**, *i.e.* one in the spirit and power of Elijah.[a] **great . . day**, the manifestation of Messiah, regarded on its testing, judging, condemning side. (6) **turn**, by the persuasions of his preaching. "He shall produce a general reformation in the minds and manners of all sorts of persons." **curse**, this has fallen upon the land of Canaan bec. the Messiah, so graciously sent, was rejected and crucified.

Lindley Murray.—In the year 1753, Lindley Murray was at school. A very strong and, he thought, beneficial impression was made upon his mind, in his eighth or ninth year, by a piece which was given him to write. The sheet was decorated with a framework of "pleasing figures," in the centre of which he was to transcribe the visit and salutation of the angels to the shepherds of Bethlehem. To use his own words, "The beauty of the sheet, the property I was to have in it, and the distinction which I expected from performing the work in a handsome manner, prepared my mind for relishing the solemn narrative, and the interesting language of the angels to the shepherds. The impression was so strong and delightful, that it has often occurred to me through life with great satisfaction; and, at this hour, it is remembered with pleasure. If parents, and others who have the care of young persons, would be studious to seize occasions of presenting the Holy Scriptures to them under favourable and inviting points of view, it would probably be attended with the happiest effects. A veneration for the sacred Scriptures, and a pleasure in perusing them, may be excited by agreeable and interesting associations; and these impressions, thus early made, there is reason to believe, would accompany the mind through the whole of life."[b]—*The reappearance of Elijah.*—Elijah was the Prophet for whose return in later years his countrymen have looked with most eager hope. . . . It was a fixed belief of the Jews that he had appeared again and again, as an Arabian merchant, to wise and good rabbis at their prayers or on their journeys. A seat is still placed for him to superintend the circumcision of the Jewish children. Passover after passover, the Jews of our own day place the paschal cup on the table, and set the door wide open, believing that that is the moment when Elijah will reappear. When goods are found and no owner comes, when difficulties arise and no solution appears, the answer is, "Put them by till Elijah comes."[c]

a Mat. xi. 14; Mk. ix. 11; Lu. i. 17. *Dr. R. Gordon*, iv. 490; *Dr. L. Twells, Boyle Lec.* i. 209; *Dr. J. Jortin*, iv. 283; *Dr. G. Croft*, ii. 269; *A. Fuller*, 103; *Dr. A. M'Caul, Blooms. Lec.* v. 34; *F. D. Maurice*, 192; *C. Kingsley, Ser. for Times*, 1.

In the imperial city, after allowing more than one-half for natural deaths, the number of exposed infants is, according to Barrow, about four thousand a year. Some of the scenes he witnessed while at Pekin were almost incredible. Before the carts go round in the morning to pick up the bodies of infants thrown in the streets—amounting to about four-and-twenty every night—dogs and swine are let loose upon them. The bodies of those found are carried to a common pit without the city walls, in which the living and the dead are thrown together. This, however, is a small proportion, compared with other places. In some provinces not one out of three is suffered to live.

b R. T. S.

c Stanley's "Jewish Church."

THE BIBLE.

Bible to be consistently read.—You, women of England, are all now shrieking with one voice—you and your clergymen together—because you hear of your Bibles being attacked. If you choose to obey your Bibles, you will never care who attacks them. It is just because you never fulfil a single downright precept of the Book that you are so careful for its credit; and just because you don't care to obey its whole words, that you are so particular about the letters of them. The Bible tells you to dress plainly,—and you are mad for finery; the Bible tells you to have pity on the poor,—and you crush them under your carriage-wheels; the Bible tells you to do judgment and justice,—and you do not know, nor care to know, so much as what the Bible word "justice" means. Do but learn so much of God's truth as that comes to; know what He means when He tells you to be just, and teach your sons that their bravery is but a fool's boast, and their deeds but a firebrand's tossing, unless they are indeed "just men, and perfect in the fear of God;" and you will soon hear no more war, unless it be indeed such as is willed by Him, of whom, though Prince of Peace, it is also written, "In righteousness He doth judge, and make war."—*Ruskin.*

Reading the Bible by children.—If it were possible to look at that book apart from its Divine revelation, it would still be the choice and flower of all books and have no match in this world. No singer, for example, has since produced the equal of David's Psalms. The reading of this book in childhood lays the best possible foundation for the mind to build on in after life. This is as true in an intellectual as in a spiritual sense. Shakespeare owed some of his proudest thoughts and most pathetic things to his acquaintanceship with the Bible. It leaves impressions that colour the whole life and never pass away. Take, for instance, its narratives, which constitute the religion of childhood—these become a part of every child's mental life, and mix with all his thoughts and feelings. Do not fancy that these Bible stories are in any case merely the history of one person or one people. They are so filled with humanity and so natural that they come home to all of us. They are eternally true, and their meaning is for every land and tongue. — *Dr. Macleod.*

Destruction of the Bible.—Destroy this volume, as the enemies of human happiness have vainly endeavoured to do, and you render us profoundly ignorant of our Creator, of the formation of the world which we inhabit, of the origin and progenitors of our race, of our present day and future destination, and consign us through life to the dominion of fancy, doubt, and conjecture. Destroy this volume, and you deprive us of religion, with all the animating consolations, hopes, and prospects which it affords, and leave us nothing but the choosing (miserable alternative!) between the cheerless gloom of infidelity and the monstrous shadows of paganism. Destroy this volume, and you unpeople heaven, bar for ever its doors against the wretched posterity of Adam, restore to the King of Terrors his fatal sting, bury hope in the same grave which receives our bodies, consign all who have died before us to eternal sleep or endless misery, and allow us to expect nothing at death but a similar fate. In a word, destroy this volume, and you take from us at once everything which prevents existence becoming of all curses the greatest; you blot out the sun, dry up the ocean, and take away the atmosphere of the moral world, and degrade man to a situation from which he may look up with envy to that of the brutes that perish.—*Dr. Payson.*

Bible in the house.—A pot of manna

was laid up beside the ark; some think within it, but rather beside it. Manna was bread given straight from the sky, and was a type of bread for the soul, which does not grow, like corn, out of the earth, but must be sent from God. He has sent it, and wherever Christ is in the house He dispenses it. In what form we get it I need hardly tell you. Our pot of manna that never corrupts or wastes, or palls on a sound taste, is the Bible. The taste of the old manna was like wafers mixed with honey; but this is "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." What a difference the Bible in a house makes, especially in a day of sickness and of death! It is like a lamp, then, in a dark night. But I was calling it bread, rather, and I go back to this to say that you should take daily meals of it. You do not like to go without food for the body for even one day. Mind your soul, too. You would think it a very miserable house that had no food in it. To an angel's eye, a house that is without Christ's book, or, having it, does not use it, is far more miserable. —*Dr. Edmond.*

The Bible in death.—Newton laid not his dying head on his *Principia*, but on his Bible; Cowper not on his *Task*, but on his Testament; Hall not on his wide fame, but on his humble hope; Michael Angelo not on that pencil which alone coped with the grandeurs of the "Judgment," but on that grace which for him shore the judgment of its terrors; Coleridge, not on his limitless genius, but on mercy for praise, to be forgiven for fame. Often must the wanderer mid American forests lay his head upon a rude log, while above him is the abyss of stars. Thus the weary, heavy-laden, dying Christian leans upon the rugged and narrow Cross, but looks up the while to the beaming canopy of immortal life — to those things which are above.—*G. Gilfillan.*

Bible self-perpetuating.—It has a self-perpetuating and multiplying power. Infidels have written books: where are they? Where is Porphyry, Julian? Fragments of them there are; but we are indebted even for this to Christian criticism. Where is Hume, Voltaire, Bolingbroke? It requires the world's reprieve to bring a copy out of the prison of their darkness. Where is the Bible? Wherever there is light. Speaking the language of heaven in sevenscore and three of the tongues of earth, and giving the Word of God by forty millions of voices to five times as many million ears, and in tongues spoken by six hundred millions of men, and having swept its path of storm through all time, it still walks triumphant, despite earth's dying malice and hell's eternal wrath; and like the apocalyptic angel, though it wraps its mantle of cloud around it, calmly looks out upon the world with a face as it were the sun encircled with the rainbow.—*Bishop Thomson.*

Preservation of the Bible.—Cities fall, kingdoms come to nothing, empires fade away as smoke. Where is Numa, Minos, Lycurgus? where are their books? and what is become of their laws? But that this book no tyrant should have been able to consume, no tradition to choke, no heretic maliciously to corrupt; that it should stand unto this day, amid the wreck of all that is human, without the alteration of one sentence so as to change the doctrine taught therein, surely there is a very singular Providence claiming our attention in a most remarkable manner. — *Bishop Jewell.*

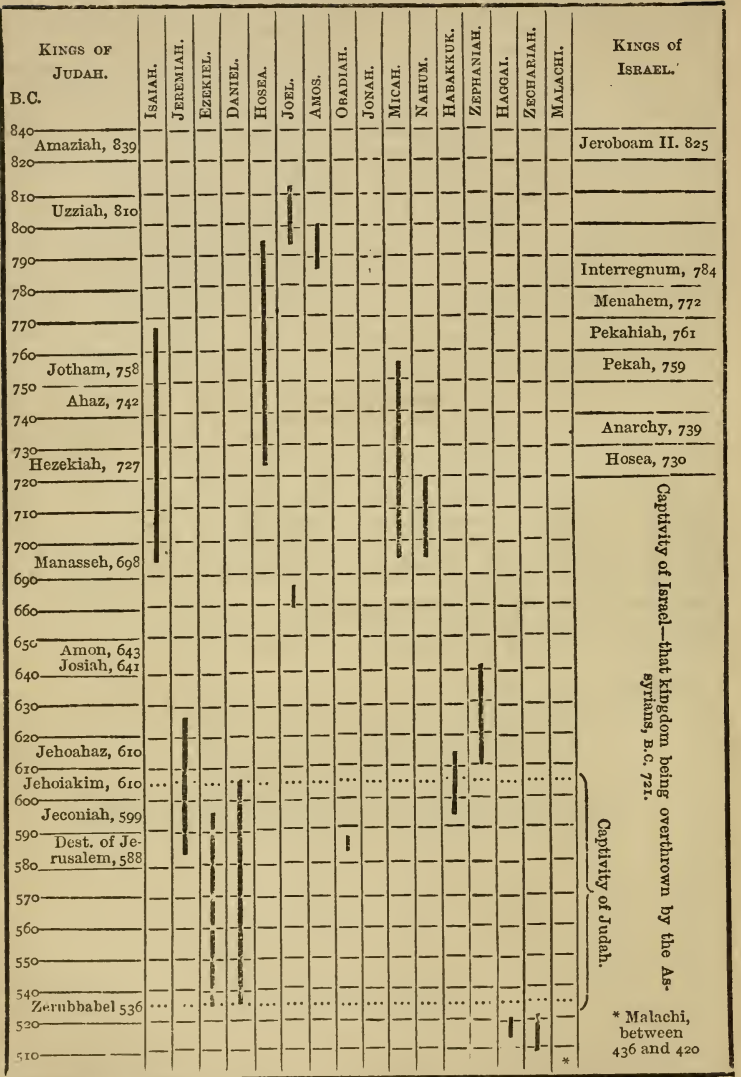
Unity of the Bible.—And if this unity can be shown to exist, none can reply that it was involved and implied in the external accidents of the book, and that we have mistaken the outward aggregation of things similar for the inward coherence of an organic body: seeing that these accidents, if the word may be permitted, are all such as would have created a sense of diversity; and it is only by penetrating through them, and not suffering them to mislead us, that we do attain to the deeper and pervading unity of Scripture. Its unity is not, for instance, that apparent one which might be produced by one language

common to all its parts. For it is scarcely possible, I suppose, for a deeper gulf to divide any two of the nobler languages of men than divides the two in which severally the Old and the New Testaments are written. Nor can it be likeness of form which has deceived us into believing that unity of spirit exists; for the forms are various and diverse as can be conceived; it is now song, now history; now dialogue, now narration; now familiar letter, now prophetic vision. There is scarcely a form of composition in which men have clothed their thoughts and embodied their emotions which does not find its archetype here. Nor yet is the unity of this volume brought about through the parts of it being all the upgrowth of a single age, and so, all breathing alike, the spirit of that age; for no single age beheld the birth of this Book, which was well-nigh two thousand years ere it was fully formed and had reached its final completion. Nor can its unity, if it exists, be accounted for from its having had but one class of men for its human authors: since men not of one class alone, but of many, and those the widest apart, kings and herdsmen, warriors and fishermen, wise men and simple, have alike brought their one stone or more, and been permitted to build them into this august dome and temple which God through so many ages was rearing to its glorious height. Deeper than all its outward circumstances, since these all would have tended to an opposite result, this unity must lie—in the all-enfolding seed out of which the whole book is evolved. But this unity of Scripture, where is it? from what point shall we behold and recognise it? Surely from that in which those verses which I have taken from the Epistle to the Ephesians will place us (Eph. i. 9, 10); when we regard it as the story of the knitting anew the broken relations between the Lord God and the race of man; of the bringing the First-begotten into the world, for the gathering together all the scattered and the sundered in Him; when we regard it as the true *Paradise Regained*—the true *De Civitate Dei*, even by a better title than those noble books which bear these names, the record of that mystery of God's will which was working from the first, to the end "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ."—*Archbishop Trench.*

Bible, its heavenly origin.—

Whence but from heaven could men, unskill'd in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.—*Dryden.*

A Table of the Prophets, showing when they Prophesied.



The date after each king's name indicates the commencement of his reign,—Joel is placed twice, as it is doubtful at which period he lived.

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SUBJECTS (PROSE).

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